

From October until the very beginning of February, a long calm was established, interrupted only by shelling and the search for scouts.

The fighting in Finland was conducted not only on the Karel isthmus. In the interval between Onega and Ladoga lakes, the 8th Army advanced under the command of I.N. Khabarova. It was given the task of reaching the rear of the Mannerheim Line and, together with the 7th Army, defeating the Finnish troops defending it. The army consisted of six rifle divisions and a tank brigade with a total strength of 75,000 personnel and 319 tanks. On December 13, it was reinforced by the 34th brigade (without the 86th brigade sent near Murmansk), which was armed with 176 tanks [347]. The Finnish 4th Air Corps fought against them, consisting of two infantry divisions and a group of Colonel V. Rytasinen, numbering up to 57 thousand people [348].

At the beginning, the 8th Army was successful: in the first week of the war, its units, overcoming the resistance of the Finns, marched 30 km to Kollaanjoki and 60 km to Tolvajärvi. Their further advance seriously threatened the rear communications of the Finns. In response, the Finnish command urgently formed a special group of troops consisting of an infantry regiment and seven separate battalions under the command of Colonel P. Talvela with the task of defeating the advancing Russians. Talvela turned out to be a talented and enterprising commander. He skillfully took advantage of the disunity of the troops of the 8th Army: its six divisions were advancing along five isolated roads on a 300-kilometer front. Acting on the flanks and in the rear of the Soviet troops, on December 12-14, his few units at Tolvajärvi were defeated and thrown back.

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139th sd. Before Christmas, at Jaglijarvi, the same fate befell the 75th Rifle Division, which was coming to its aid. According to Finnish data, these two divisions lost at least 3,000 men killed and 600 captured. The Finns got rich trophies: 60 tanks, 3 armored cars, 30 guns, 200 heavy and 140 light machine guns, 3350 rifles and 10 cars [349]. After such a defeat, the front line in this direction stabilized until the very end of the war.

The success inspired the Finns, and the main forces of the 4th ak also launched a counteroffensive. At first, it did not develop very well, but on January 3, the Finns managed to intercept the communications of the 18th SDI of the 34th brigade and cut off their combat units from the rear. And on January 11, they managed to press the 168th rifle division to the shore of Ladoga in the Kittel area. It could only be supplied by air or over the ice of the lake, but this possibility was eliminated over time. Meanwhile, the Stavka was shuffling the leadership of the 8th Army. At first, instead of Khabarov, V.N. became its commander. Kurdyumov, and then he was replaced by G.M. Stern, but this did not improve the position of those surrounded. On January 10, the southern group of troops of the 8th Army was separated from its composition, and

On February 12, on its basis, the 15th Army was formed under the command of M.P. Kovalev. Two weeks later, he was replaced by the same V.N. Kurdyumov. The main task of the new formation was to help out the encircled units, and then advance on Sortavala. Only at the beginning of March did the 15th Army manage to restore contact with the 168th Rifle Division, but the 18th Rifle Division of the 34th Tank Brigade failed to break through.

The fate of those surrounded was tragic. The Finns completely cut them off from the supply and dismembered them into separate small "cauldrons". The ring of blockade was shrinking tighter and tighter. The trapped fighters held firm, but they were running out of ammunition, medicines, fuel and warm clothes, food was completely gone. When the horses were eaten, leftovers, old horse skins, guts, and even hooves were thrown into the landfill. People quickly weakened from constant hunger and cold, some developed "night blindness", and they could not see anything in the dark. Attempts to supply from the air were of little use, a significant part of the dropped went to the Finns. In response to constant requests for help from the

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The government only ordered to hold on and promised to help out, but faith in these promises quickly vanished.

When in mid-January the commander of the 34th brigade commander S. Kondratiev, who himself was in one of their "cauldrons", answered his battalion commander-76 captain S. Ryazanov: "Hold on, there will be no help," he decided to act independently. He gathered the commanders of the battalion entrusted to him and set them the task of getting out of the encirclement. However, the representative of the Special Department, who was present there, accused Ryazanov of cowardice and canceled his order. Ryazanov tried to insist on his own: "I am the battalion commander, and follow my orders." In response, the special officer shot him on the spot. Most of the personnel of the 76th TB did not long outlive their commander: until February 4, only 19 of them survived, who managed to break through to the brigade headquarters in South Lemetgi [350]. But even there the situation was little better than in their old place.

In January, the 34th brigade still had enough fuel left to break out of the encirclement on tanks, leaving the rest of the equipment behind. But Stern forbade the retreat and once again promised to help. A month later, the fuel ran out, and the tanks could only be used as fixed firing points. Some garrisons of the "cauldrons" on their own initiative began to try to break free to their own. On the night of February 15, 1090 people from Lovajärvi, leaving heavy weapons, made their way through the Finnish barrier. At the same time, 280 of them died or went missing, but the rest successfully connected with the troops of the 15th Army the next day. Three days later, about 1,700 fighters from the 34th brigade of the 18th rifle division, surrounded at Mitro, also made a breakthrough. However, most of them died, more than 250 were captured, and only 30 people managed to get to the location of the 168th Rifle Division [351]. Together-

With her, they held out until the end of the war.

By the end of the month, only five blockaded garrisons remained from the trapped 18th Rifle Division and 34th Tank Brigade. Finally, on February 28, the Headquarters allowed them to withdraw in the direction of La vojärvi. On the night of February 29, surrounded by two columns, they made a breakthrough, leaving the wounded and sick. The southern column, not numbering 1486 people, on the evening of February 29, managed to break through to the 15th Army, losing 249 people killed and missing along the way. 900 of those who survived were wounded or

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frostbitten. At the same time, the northern column, numbering about one and a half thousand people, was completely destroyed by the Finns. The banner of the 18th Rifle Division and extensive booty fell into their hands: 132 tanks, 12 armored vehicles, 55 field and 47 anti-tank guns, 17 grenade launchers, 66 easel, 108 light and 13 anti-aircraft machine guns, 915 rifles, 2 radio stations, 36 tractors, 285 trucks and 35 cars [352]. As a result, out of 3787 personnel of the 34th brigade, 45% were lost: 902 were killed, 414 were injured, 94 were frostbitten and sick, 291 were missing. lytic and special departments, as well as all battalion commanders [353].

Natural conditions in the Kem-Kandalaksha region were even more difficult than in the Ladoga region. The greater distance to the north affected, and the area was much less populated, so there were very few roads. As part of the 9th Army concentrated there under the command of M.P. Dukhanov included four divisions, soon reinforced by the fifth, and a corps artillery regiment, which included 110 thousand people and 191 tanks [354]. At first, these forces were opposed only by the Finnish border guards, reinforced by 3-4 jaeger battalions [3535]. The main task of the 9th Army was to capture the Finnish ports of Oulu and Kemi on the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia. Thus, Finland was cut in two at its narrowest point. The entire operation was planned to be completed in 20 days. The army was to advance on a 400-kilometer front in three isolated directions.

On the left wing from Rebola, in the direction of Korpisami, the most prepared 54th Guards Rifle Division set out. It moved along four different roads in a strip up to 160 km wide. During the first week, the division covered about 50 km and began to threaten communication between the south of Finland and its north. Finns

, it was necessary to urgently form and throw against her a separate brigade under the command of Lieutenant Colonel A. Vuokko, consisting of five battalions and an artillery battalion. Taking advantage of the disunity of the forces of the 54th Guards Rifle Division and superiority in maneuverability, Vuokko managed to stop his enemy and even pushed him back. At the end of January, with the help of reinforcements approaching the Finns, the 54th Guards Rifle Division was completely surrounded in the Rusty area. However, its troops were able to quickly organize

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in several points all-round defense. It was cemented by strongholds, reinforced with blockhouses made of thick logs and saturated with artillery and machine guns, and the Finns there did not have heavy artillery capable of destroying them. In addition, the division managed to stock up on food. Together with food dropped from the air, it was enough to survive a month and a half blockade until the end of the war. But the 54th Guards Rifle Division suffered heavy losses: 2118 people were killed, 3732 were wounded and 573 were missing [356]. This amounted to over 60% of its original composition.

On the northern flank of the 9th Army from Kandalaksha, the 122nd Rifle Division advanced on Rova Niemi. On December 8, she captured Salla, 40 km from the border, and on December 16 she reached Joutsijärvi, advancing 110 km. The division had only 30 km left to go to Kemijärvi, the terminus of the railway going to Kemi and further south, to the key road junction of Oulu. Such a dangerous threat forced the Finns to urgently strengthen their troops in this direction from two to eight battalions. The counterattack they delivered on December 19 threw the 122nd Rifle Division back almost 20 km. The front was established northwest of Salla, although local fighting continued there until the end of the war. Even the reserve 88th Rifle Division deployed to this sector could not change the situation.

But the most dramatic events took place in the central part of the offensive zone of the 9th Army. They, like a drop of water, reflected the general shortcomings of the Red Army of that time, so we will dwell on them in more detail. There, the 163rd Rifle Division, formed about three months ago, went on the offensive from Ukhta. It numbered over 12 thousand people, 92 guns and 14 tanks. At the beginning of the war, she was opposed by the only Finnish infantry battalion from local reservists, called up only a month and a half before the start of the war [357]. On December 7, the division captured the large village of Suomussalmi, which the Finns almost completely burned before leaving. But by that time, Colonel H. Siilasvuo managed to form a brigade from a regiment and two battalions with a total number of 4,700 people, however, without any artillery. The Finns were much inferior to the Russians in numbers and firepower, but they were significantly superior in maneuverability. Unlike their opponents, they were equipped with skis.

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and could move quickly off the roads On December 11, the brigade counterattacked the Russians and cut off their supply routes from the east. The 163rd Rifle Division lost the initiative and suffered heavy losses! and was forced to go on the defensive. She began to have serious supply shortages. And the Finns, on the contrary, have noticeably strengthened. Siilasvuo received under his command another infantry regiment, two battalions and 10 guns, two of them anti-tank. On December 22, his brigade was reorganized into the 9th Infantry Division, the number of which reached 11.5 thousand people. Working closely with her

there was a group of Lieutenant Colonel P. Susitaivala consisting of four battalions. The Finns had to hurry: according to radio intelligence, they learned that the fresh 44th Rifle Division was moving forward to help the 163rd Rifle Division, which had fallen into a difficult situation. Moreover, on December 23, the first direct combat contact between the Finns and its forward detachment took place.

In order to defeat their enemies one by one, on December 27, Siilasvuo's troops decisively attacked the positions of the 163rd Rifle Division and broke its resistance in two days of fierce fighting. The frustrated remnants of the division retreated across the ice of Lake Kiantajärvi to the northeast to Juntusranta. From December 20 to January 1, the 163rd SD lost 353 people killed, 486 wounded, 65 frostbitten. Another 107 people during this time were captured, and 346 went missing [359]. The Finns got 42 tanks and armored cars, 46 field and 49 anti-tank guns, 13 anti-aircraft machine guns, 20 tractors, 230 trucks, [0 motorcycles and 450 horses?]. Finnish losses amounted to 350 killed and 600 wounded [361].

Harsh organizational conclusions immediately followed. The commander of the 662nd Rifle Division of the 163rd Rifle Division, Sharov, and his commissar Podkhomutov, by the verdict of the tribunal on January 11, were shot in front of the formation of the regiment. A few days later, the same sad fate befell the commander of the 3rd battalion, Tchaikovsky, who was wounded in battle. On December 20, Dukhanov, commander of the 9th Army, was replaced by V.I. Chuikov. By order of the Stavka dated 01/12/1940, the commander of the 47th division commander

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During the first three weeks of the war, the 163rd Rifle Division lost 527 people killed. tymi, 964 wounded and 226 frostbitten [358].

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In addition, "the 163rd Rifle Division left a huge amount of property on the battlefield: summer shirts - 3028 pieces, underwear - 11 849 pairs, wadded trousers - 4321 pieces, gloves - 6147, felt boots - 2250, leather shoes - 6908 pairs" [360].

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I.F. Dashichev and the chiefs of staff of the 7th and 9th armies, commanders G.S. Isserson and A.D. Sokolov was removed from his posts and reduced in rank to colonel [362]. Interestingly, the command of the 163rd Rifle Division retained their positions and ranks.

Having defeated units of the 163rd Rifle Division, the Finnish 9th Infantry Division without delay moved towards a new enemy - the 44th Rifle Division of the Red Army. It was a full-blooded cadre unit with a long and glorious military history behind it. Suffice it to say that N.A. was its commander during the Civil War. Shchors. The division performed well in exercises and maneuvers, and therefore was always in good standing with the authorities. In September 1939, she took part in a campaign against Western Ukraine. The 44th Rifle Division was assigned the 312th Tank and 4th Reconnaissance Battalions, which had 30 tanks and 18 tankettes. But most of the soldiers of the 44th SD were not regular soldiers, but recent recruits. The fact is that shortly before the start of hostilities, 2/3 of the personnel

divisions were sent to serve in the Baltic states, where Soviet troops were introduced. Instead of them, poorly trained henchmen were called in. The division was permanently stationed in the Ukraine, so both its leadership and all personnel had little idea of the natural conditions that awaited them in the far north, and were not familiar with the tactics and tricks of their future opponents, the Finns. In addition, very few of the fighters and commanders knew how to ski, and all were poorly equipped with warm clothes and shoes.

But the main problem of the 44th Rifle Division was its weak command. Commander of the division brigade commander A.V. Vinogradov! and chief of staff Colonel O.I. Volkov? were typical promoters of that time. Their rapid career growth was facilitated by repressions and a shortage of command personnel. Both, in their business and moral qualities and experience, far from corresponded to their extremely responsible positions. This was immediately revealed in a combat situation.

A.V. Vinogradov in 1935-1936. commanded a battalion with the rank of captain. In June 1937 he was already a major and regiment commander, and in February 1938 he became a colonel. He received the post of commander of the 44th Rifle Division along with the rank of brigade commander in January 1939.

O.I. Volkov at the end of 1935 was also a captain. After graduating from the academy on June 31, 1939, he was awarded the rank of colonel.

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novke. But their dizzying career at that time was by no means an exception. So, out of 52 divisions that participated in the Soviet-Finnish war, in 32 commanders two years ago were only battalion commanders. Only five commanders had more than a year of experience in this position [363].

In addition, the regular organization of the 44th Rifle Division, as, indeed, of most of the other formations of the Red Army thrown against Finland, did not correspond much to the specific requirements of the northern theater of operations. The division was primarily intended for war in the middle zone. For northern Finland, and especially in a snowy winter, it was obviously overloaded with heavy equipment, and therefore too slow, clumsy and prone to getting stuck on narrow and winding local roads with poor coverage. This had an immediate effect on practice. New Year's Eve found the marching columns of the 44th Rifle Division stretched for 25-30 km on the road from Raate to Suomussalmi. At the same time, due to the haste and confusion, the reconnaissance and engineer battalions of the division ended up at its very tail. And on December 22, the vanguard was stopped by two Finnish companies with a total number of only 350 people. At the same time, a couple of small detachments of Finns attacked the division from the south. Fear has big eyes, and Vinogradov got the impression that he was being attacked by 1.5 regiments, and not 1.5 battalions, as it really was. The 44th Rifle Division could not get off the road, it also could not manage to break through the Finnish barrier, therefore, instead of active actions, Vinogradov ordered his troops to

fall. His division got stuck on the road some ten kilometers from Suomussalmi, where at that very time units of the 163rd Rifle Division were hardly repelling Finnish attacks. The 3rd border regiment of the NKVD interacted with the 44th division, in which there were 1,500 people. His task was to ensure uninterrupted traffic on the road to Suomussalmi, but well-trained border guards acted passively and had no effect on the course of hostilities.

In the meantime, on the orders of Siilasvuo, 6-9 km from the Raate-Suomussalmi road, on the ice of frozen lakes, the Finns paved a parallel path with snow plows for the rapid transfer of forces intended to attack the 44th Rifle Division. Stretched along the road in a long and thin "gut" of the division, they were an ideal target for flank

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Finnish attacks. And they did not keep themselves waiting long. On the night of January 2, about a thousand Finnish skiers quietly removed the Soviet military outposts and took possession of a section of the road half a kilometer long. Thus began the dismemberment of the 44th SD into separate parts and their subsequent destruction.

The Finns operated with four operational groups supported by a light reserve detachment. On January 5, their forces consisted of 11,238 people, armed with 8 field and 8 anti-tank guns, 44 mortars, 171 heavy and 381 light machine guns and 336 machine guns [364]. They were in complete control of the initiative, while Vinogradov's fighters only desperately fought back and only occasionally made scattered and unsuccessful attempts to break out of the trap. It should also be taken into account that the Finns periodically replaced their units at the forefront, giving them the opportunity to relax and warm themselves in the rear, and they fed themselves hot food every day. At the same time, the Red Army often starved for days on end, and they were generally forbidden to make fire. The reason was the constant shelling of field kitchens and bonfires by Finnish snipers and bullets. In the cold, the strength of the personnel of the 44th Rifle Division quickly melted away, and its morale fell. On the evening of January 4, a whole battalion arbitrarily left its positions and came to the divisional command post due to the fact that its fighters had eaten almost nothing since the New Year.

The command had a poor idea of the current situation and at first insistently demanded that Vinogradov destroy his enemy. When they finally realized what was going on, on January 6 he was ordered to retreat, but at the same time to withdraw all the materiel with him. However, by that time, due to the lack of fuel for cars and fodder for horses, this task had become physically impossible. After several days of intense fighting without any supply of ammunition, they ran out of ammunition, so it also became impossible to hold positions. The divisional commander completely lost control of his units, organized resistance was falling apart before our eyes, the fighters began to scatter along

forests or surrender. On the same day, Vinogradov instructed the commander of one of the regiments to lead the breakthrough of the division, and he himself, together with the head of the divisional political commander

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affairs of I.T. Pakhomenko, accompanied by a company, left the battlefield through the forest along a randomly found clearing. In the evening of the next day, he safely reached his people in Vazhenvaara with a detachment of about 30 people. We managed to get out of the encirclement and the division chief of staff. The resistance of scattered groups of soldiers of the 44th SD was completely suppressed on the night of January 8. But even in the following days, the Finns had to deal with clearing the surrounding forests from the Red Army men hiding there.

Vinogradov, Volkov and Pakhomenko did not rejoice at their salvation for long. On January 11, a military tribunal sentenced them to death. The sentence was carried out immediately and publicly.

Finnish losses were 459 killed and 500 wounded. At the same time, according to the headquarters of the 44th SD, in the first week of January alone, she lost 1001 people killed, 1430 wounded and 2243 missing. Losses in weapons and military equipment amounted to: tanks - 42, armored vehicles - 6, guns - 79, 82-mm mortars - 14, heavy machine guns - 97, light machine guns - 251, rifles - 4340, machine guns - 150, revolvers and pistols - 1235, trucks - 189, horses - more than a thousand [365].

A significant part of these weapons and equipment went to the Finns in good condition. The captured trophies were of great importance for the Finnish army, which was sorely lacking everything necessary for waging war. It is not surprising that on January 11, 1940, the commander of the Lapland Group of Forces, General K. Wallenius, to the question of a correspondent of the French newspaper "G'Exce]zor, who is the most active in supplying military equipment to Finland, without hesitation, answered: "Russians, of course! » [366].

Only the 14th Army, operating in the Murmansk direction, successfully completed its task. In 18 days, it traveled 120-150 km and captured the Sredniy and Rybachy peninsulas, as well as the Petsamo region with the port of Liinakhamari. Yes, this is understandable, because the balance of power there did not leave the Finns any hope of stopping the Russians. I must say that, despite its name, the 14th Army, in essence, was only a corps, consisting of two divisions and six separate battalions, including three tank and three reconnaissance, with a total strength of 38,822 people. She was armed with 217 guns, 114 tanks, 25 tanks

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ketok and 77 aircraft. In addition to these troops, on the Murmansk

Since the beginning of November, the 52nd Rifle Division began to be transferred from Belarus. Against it, the Finns had only an infantry company and a battery of four antediluvian 75-mm guns of the 1887 model. with a total of 757 people. Later, the Finnish troops in the Arctic were reinforced by three more battalions [367].

By the end of December, the advance of the 14th Army had stopped. Her communications were too stretched, besides, almost two months of polar night had come. Further fighting on the part of the Finns acquired the character of a partisan struggle. In the conditions of overwhelming Soviet superiority in forces, there was nothing else left for them. The losses of the 14th Army throughout the war amounted to 197 people killed, 402 wounded and frostbitten, and 8 tanks. In turn, the Finns lost 33 people killed, 69 missing and 87 wounded [368]. In general, the armed struggle in this area was of a pronounced local character, and had practically no effect on the general course of the Soviet-Finnish war.

The decisive events on the Karelian Isthmus took place after the onset of the new year 1940. The Soviet leadership no longer harbored any illusions about a quick and easy victory over Finland. Finally realizing the complexity of this task, it took its solution with the utmost seriousness. Headquarters Directive No. 0977/op of 01/07/1940 formed the North-Western Front, which combined the actions of the 7th and 13th armies. The commander of the KOVO S.K. was appointed to lead it. Timoshenko, and the first secretary of the Leningrad City Committee and the Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks A.A. became a member of the Military Council. Zhdanov [369]. Enormous forces from different military districts were drawn into the front. In January, 12 additional divisions and six artillery regiments were transferred to the Karelian Isthmus alone, including a large

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Members of the Finnish paramilitary volunteer organization "Shütskor" (translated as "Security Corps"). It was considered an auxiliary part of the national defense and in 1939 had over 110,000 members.

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nost'. As a result, the balance of forces there, as can be seen from Table 4.3, became even more favorable for the Red Army.

Table 4.3

POWER RELATIONSHIP
ON THE KARELIAN ISTH BY FEBRUARY 11, 1939

Finnish

army "Pere-:
necks"

Equivalent divisions* 460,000

Source: [371].

Notes:

* When calculating the number of equivalent divisions, one brigade was equated to half a division;

** excluding aviation of the Baltic Fleet.

The development of further operations was based on Shaposhnikov's original plan, which had previously been frivolously brushed aside. It was decided to strike the main blow with the adjacent flanks of the 7th and 13th armies in the general direction towards Vyborg (see Diagram 6). The average density of troops in the breakthrough sectors reached 2-2.5 km per division. This time, the Soviet troops knew well what was ahead of them, and were much better prepared to solve the tasks they faced. They were persistently trained in offensive tactics and methods of breaking through fortified areas. The close interaction of infantry, artillery and tanks on the battlefield was especially carefully practiced. For the first time, assault groups appeared in their composition, usually as part of a rifle

' In the west of the Leningrad Region, the reserve of the Main

command as part of a cavalry corps, three rifle divisions and a tank brigade, which from February 8 was subordinated to the command of the NWF Front [370].

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a platoon reinforced by a squad of sappers with explosive charges, 2-3 snipers, machine guns, mortars, 1-2 45-mm cannons and four tanks, one of which, as a rule, was a flamethrower. The scouts were able to establish the locations of many bunkers and fire weapons of the Finns. The nutrition of the soldiers and their provision with warm clothes, camouflage suits and skis has improved significantly. They had warm mittens, in which the index finger was separated from the others, so that it was more convenient to pull the trigger.

The decisive role in breaking through the Finnish defenses was assigned to artillery, especially high-powered guns. 96 203-mm and three

234-mm howitzers, 28 280-mm mortars, as well as four 180-mm, three 305-mm and two 356-mm naval guns on railway transporters [372]. In the decisive sectors, the density of artillery was increased to 75-85 or more barrels per kilometer of the front. The accumulated stocks of ammunition reached 12 ammunition.

From the beginning of February, private offensive operations were carried out with the aim of capturing the key strongholds of the Finns and improving the starting position for the offensive. These actions were even more important for wearing down the defenders of the Mannerheim Line. Finally, on February 11, the decisive offensive began. It was preceded by a powerful artillery preparation lasting up to three hours. During this time, 230 thousand shells of all calibers hit the Finnish front line. Direct fire on pillboxes was hit by heavy guns, up to 280-mm mortars. The Finns were also lucky that the weather that day turned out to be non-flying... Comprehensive preparation of the offensive fully justified itself. The Red Army has finally learned to realize its numerical superiority. Despite the desperate resistance of the Finns, in three days of fighting, the 123rd Rifle Division broke through the main strip of the Mannerheim Line in the Summa region. The Finnish units defending there lost up to 40% of their personnel. The next day, the gap was widened to include three more divisions. To avoid the imminent encirclement, on the night of February 17, Mannerheim ordered the Finnish troops to withdraw to the second

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defense line. The rate of advance of the Red Army, which had previously been 2 km per day, now increased to 6-10. On February 19, the commander of the Finnish army "Isthmus" H. Esterman was replaced by General A. Heinrichs, but even he could change little in the situation. Nevertheless, the Finns were lucky, the weather played into their hands. On February 21, a three-day snowstorm broke out, which greatly hampered the advance of the Red Army units. The Finnish troops were able to break away from the persecution and take up pre-prepared positions in time. The Soviet attempt to break through them on the move failed.

Despite the overwhelming superiority of the enemy, the Finns continued to act actively. In the early hours of 26 February they made their first tank attack of that war with one tank company of eight Vickers. At the same time, two of them broke down on the way, and the rest were hit by Soviet tankers. It is interesting that the Finnish infantry did not support their tankers at the same time. Finnish tanks continued to participate in the fighting, when on February 29 two more tanks came across Soviet T-28s from the 20th Tank Army. The result was quite natural: both were shot. After such a beating, the remnants of the company were taken to Vyborg.

On February 28, the 7th Army stormed the second strip

"Mannerheim lines". It began with an hour and a half of artillery preparation with a density of 135 or more guns and mortars per kilometer of front. The Finns could not withstand such an onslaught, and on March 3 they retreated to the rear defensive line. Fierce street fighting broke out on the southern outskirts of Vyborg. On the night of March 2, the troops of the 10th sk began to bypass this city from the south-west along the ice of the Vyborg Bay. Two days later they were joined by units of the 28th Rifle Corps from the reserve of the High Command. Six divisions from these corps captured a bridgehead up to 40 km wide and up to 13 km deep. The Finns with great difficulty managed to stop their advance, which threatened to intercept the main supply routes of the Isthmus army. But their last reserves

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In service with a separate 4th tr there were only 13 light tanks "Vickers", of which 10 were armed with 37-mm guns.

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dried up, and the soldiers on the front line were exhausted to the limit by continuous heavy fighting. Meanwhile, after the breakthrough of the Mannerheim Line, the front line expanded by a third and it became impossible to hold it. At the same time, the forces of the Red Army on the Finnish front grew to 60 divisions, 8 tank and 3 airborne brigades, 10 tank and 56 aviation regiments, not counting the border, rear and spare parts. The group consisted of 960 thousand people, 11,266 guns and mortars, 2,998 tanks and 3,253 aircraft. Another 12 divisions were preparing to be transferred to the front. Against them, the Finns had only 340 thousand people and 1185 guns and mortars [373]. The Soviet command intensified the onslaught in order to have time to put an end to the resistance of the Finns before the onset of the spring thaw.

In such a situation, on March 9, Mannerheim reported to the State Council of Finland that his troops were not able to hold back the pressure of the Red Army for a long time. Without waiting for the complete defeat of its army, on March 5, the Finnish government conveyed to Moscow its consent to enter into peace negotiations with the USSR on the basis of Soviet conditions received on February 22 through Sweden. In addition to pre-war territorial requests, the Soviet side demanded that Vyborga, the second largest city in Finland, be transferred to it. Negotiations began in Moscow on March 7 and ended at 10 pm on March 12 with the signing of a peace treaty. In accordance with it, hostilities ceased at exactly noon on March 13, 1940.

But even on this very last day of the war, knowing full well that Vyborg would still pass into Soviet hands, the command of the Red Army continued the assault on this city, which had begun on March 12. As a result, it was not possible to take Vyborg, and the troops suffered senseless, unjustified losses. This is not to mention the destruction that Vyborg suffered during the assault and which had to be restored.

after the war.

And a lot of blood has already been shed. The losses of the armed forces of the USSR and Finland for 105 days of the war are summarized in Table 4.4.

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Table 4.4

LOSSES OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE USSR AND
FINLAND IN PERSONNEL FOR THE PERIOD FROM 11/30/1939 TO 03/13/1940

USSR ratio

Losses in people, total

Source: [374].

Notes:

* Knocked out in battle, of which approximately 650 were irretrievably lost; n/a — no data.

Such a humiliating ratio of military losses could not have been announced to the Soviet people, therefore, at a meeting of the UT session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on March 29, 1940, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars Molotov officially announced completely different figures, underestimating the irretrievable losses in people by 2.6 times (missing without He didn't mention the news at all.)

"<...> on our side, the number of people killed and died from wounds is 46,745 people, <...> the number of wounded is 158 \$ 863 people. <...> the victims of the Finns are much larger than ours. According to the minimum estimates of our General Staff, the number of Finns killed reaches at least 60 thousand, not counting those who died from wounds, and the number of wounded is at least 250,000 people" [375].

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Meanwhile, the Finns immediately announced the truth about their losses. Over time, they were only refined: Those who returned from captivity and those who were recognized as killed were excluded from the number of missing persons. They have been moved to the appropriate category. More accurate information about

the losses of the Red Army "in that war, not famous," as the poet A.T. called it. Tvardovsky, who participated in it as a war correspondent, began to be published during the years of perestroika and glasnost. Moreover, the figures with the introduction of new sources into scientific circulation change upwards.

We have presented the most reliable data from our point of view from a statistical study prepared by employees of the General Staff and the Military Memorial Center of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. But the Finnish losses in this respected work are shamelessly distorted. Referring to some Finnish sources from the newspaper "Za rubezhom" No. 48/1989, the authors estimated the human losses in Finland at 48,243 people killed and 43,000 wounded. And they immediately printed that, according to other official sources from the Military Historical Journal No. 4/1993, "the Finnish army lost 95,000 killed and 45,000 wounded in this war" [376]. Let us leave the choice of such dubious "sources" on the conscience of Krivosheev and the group of authors he leads.

In April-June 1940, a mutual exchange of prisoners of war took place. At the same time, 20 Finns and 99 Soviet prisoners did not want to return to their homeland [377]. Our country met those returning from captivity quite unkindly. Only 450 of them, who fell into the hands of the enemy wounded, sick or frostbitten, were released from criminal liability. 4354 former prisoners, without any trial, by the decision of the Special Conference of the NKVD of the USSR received from 5 to 8 years in labor camps. According to the verdicts of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, 158 were shot, and the rest ended up in the same camps. In contrast, the vast majority of Finnish prisoners, after a short stay in the filtration camp, went home [378]. Only 30 of them were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment (mainly from 6 to 10 years) on charges of spying for the USSR and treason [379].

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The Soviet-Finnish war caused enormous damage to the reputation of the USSR throughout the world. An extremely negative reaction from the international community was caused by the bombing of cities in Finland by Soviet aircraft, which was accompanied by numerous casualties among the civilian population. It should be noted that many bombs were dropped on civilians not intentionally, but as a result of the mistakes and mistakes of Soviet pilots or their loss of orientation. So on the very first day of the war, DB-3 bombers, instead of a seaport, dropped their deadly cargo on a densely populated region of Helsinki. At the same time, 91 people were killed, and many were injured. In response to numerous protests from European countries, Molotov cynically declared that Soviet planes were dropping not bombs, but sacks of bread on Finnish cities to help their starving inhabitants... 956 civilian

persons, 540 were seriously injured, and another 1,300 were lightly injured. 256 stone and about 1800 wooden buildings were destroyed [380].

Little Finland, subjected to the aggression of her huge neighbor, aroused natural sympathy in many countries. During the war, 11,663 foreign volunteers arrived there, who wished to defend it with weapons in their hands. They came from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, USA, Hungary, Belgium, Germany, Holland, England, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Austria, Spain, France, Portugal, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and other countries. Direct material and financial assistance to Finland was provided by such different states as Sweden, Italy, France, England, Belgium, USA, Hungary, Norway, Denmark, Spain and Switzerland. On December 2, 1939, the US government imposed a "moral embargo" on the sale of aircraft, aircraft equipment and strategic raw materials to the Soviet Union.

At the same time, Germany, in full accordance with the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, supported Finland's hostile neutrality. She not only stopped her deliveries to this country, but also banned the transit of oru

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zhia to Finland through its territory. Moreover, its leadership agreed to the request of the USSR to organize the supply of Soviet submarines with German ships [381]. German diplomats were instructed to express sympathy for the Soviet point of view on this conflict [382]. In turn, the USSR forbade its submarines from sinking German transports with iron ore from Sweden in the zone of the Soviet naval blockade [383].

In response to Finland's complaint about the Soviet attack, the League of Nations attempted to mediate the conflict. To do this, on December 4, its General Secretary, J. Avenol, invited the head of the USSR government, Molotov, to come to Geneva to attend the Council of the League of Nations and its Assembly. Molotov on the same day justified his refusal in a telegram, which, in particular, stated:

"The Soviet Union is not at war with Finland and does not threaten the Finnish people with war. <...> The Soviet Union is in peaceful relations with the Democratic Republic of Finland, with whose government on December 2, p. d. they concluded an agreement on mutual assistance and friendship. This treaty settled all the issues on which negotiations were unsuccessfully conducted with the delegates of the former government of Finland, which has now resigned its powers.

Government of the Democratic Republic of Finland

in his declaration of December 1, d. appealed to the government of the USSR with a proposal to provide the Finnish Democratic Republic with assistance with its military forces in order to jointly eliminate as soon as possible the most dangerous hotbed of war created in Finland by its former rulers" [384].

The League of Nations, outraged by such frank demagoguery and continued aggression, on February 14 expelled the USSR from its ranks and recommended that all countries provide assistance to Finland.

The government of the "Democratic Republic of Finland", to which Molotov referred, was proclaimed | December 1939 in the Finnish village of Terijoki, only

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something captured by the Red Army. It was headed by a member of the Presidium and secretary of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, O. Kuusinen, who emigrated to the USSR from Finland 20 years ago. Unlike him, even the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Finland, A. Tuominen, who was then living in Stockholm, flatly refused on November 13 to head a puppet government and oppose his country. The USSR struggled to give Kuusinen's government in exile a modicum of legitimacy. He was constantly written about in Soviet newspapers. Kuusinen himself participated in official meetings and negotiations with Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov and Zhdanov and signed international treaties with them. Youmu even organized their military forces. As early as November 11, an order appeared on the formation of the 106th SD from Finns, Karelians and Ingrians, called up in Soviet Karelia and the Leningrad Region. On November 23, they began to deploy it into a separate mountain rifle corps, which later received the name of the 1st GSK of the Finnish People's Army. In mid-December, its number reached 18 thousand people, and by the end of the war it had reached 20 thousand. The declaration of the Kuusinen government on December 1 unequivocally publicly proclaimed: "The First Finnish Corps is given the honor to bring the banner of the Finnish Democratic Republic to the capital and hoist it on the roof of the presidential palace, to the delight of the working people and the fear of the enemies of the people" [385]. But the corps never got to the front, and in May 1940 it was reorganized into the 71st Rifle Division. Apart from the USSR, only Mongolia and Tuva officially recognized Kuusinen's government. And after the conclusion of a peace treaty between the USSR and Finland, it quietly and imperceptibly sank into oblivion. Subsequently, some of its members, headed by Kuusinen, were appointed to important posts in the Karelian-Finnish SSR formed on March 31, 1940.

Questions are often discussed why the Red Army stopped in March 1940, when a complete victory was

not far off already? Why was the whole of Finland not occupied? In order to answer them, it is necessary to take into account the then international situation, the development of which had

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undoubted influence on the Soviet-Finnish war. It was only part of the Second World War, although it was on its periphery. At the same time, England and France were trying to defeat Germany by strangling her with a blockade. One of the most important economic partners of the Germans was Sweden, which annually supplied them with about 10 million tons of iron ore, vital for the smooth operation of the military industry. In 1940, Germany imported more than half of its iron ore, and 83% of this flow came from Sweden [386].

In winter, most of the Swedish ports in the Baltic were freezing, and the lion's share of deliveries from Sweden to Germany went through the Norwegian port of Narvik. At the same time, ore carriers used the territorial waters of Norway to the very straits from the North Sea to the Baltic. Therefore, the allies were constantly looking for a convenient chance to establish their control over Scandinavia, although they did not want to unceremoniously violate the neutrality of the countries of this region. Intervention in the Soviet-Finnish war provided them with just such an opportunity. It was supposed to follow in response to the request of the Finns for help. A variety of options were considered. Finally, on February 16, the calculation of the forces intended for this operation was completed. The troops were supposed to land in northern Norway - about 5 thousand people and in southern Sweden - over 100 thousand people. It was planned to send no more than 13 thousand people to the Finnish direction. In addition, options were being worked out for the transfer of troops to Petsamo, but even there the main goal was to capture the Swedish iron mines. Along with it, the blockade and capture of Murmansk was planned. The beginning of the landing was planned for the second half of March [387].

In addition, as early as October 1939, the leaders of Britain and France discussed plans for aerial bombardment of non-oil fields in Baku, which provided about 80% of the oil produced in the USSR. These strikes were designed to deprive Germany of the most important source of strategic raw materials in the event that the USSR became its direct military ally. The Anglo-French plans became known to the Soviet leadership and greatly alarmed them. The problem was not even the number of troops that could

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drink against the Soviet Union, it was not that big. But a direct military clash with England and France meant the inevitable involvement of the USSR in a major war, and even on the side of Germany. Such a perspective

was in no way part of the Soviet plans, so the war with Finland had to be ended as soon as possible, and its sovietization was postponed for the future.

Formally, the Soviet Union became the winner in the Soviet-Finnish war: it achieved the fulfillment of all its pre-war requirements, and even more. But if we compare the result obtained with the terrible price that had to be paid for it, it becomes clear that it cannot be attributed to success in any way. Moreover, the USSR, with its own hands, turned neutral Finland into its enemy and ally for Germany. Moreover, of all the German allies in World War II, it was the Finns who were the most combat-ready, not inferior in this respect even to the Wehrmacht. The famous Soviet saboteur Ilya Grigoryevich Starinov, who himself participated in the Soviet-Finnish war and was seriously wounded there on December 30, later wrote:

“As a result of a bloody unpopular war, which showed how weakened the Red Army was after the repressions of 1937-1938, the border was pushed to the west by more than 100 kilometers from Leningrad, but Finland moved from the Anglo-French bloc to the Nazi camp, and this led later to the death of hundreds of thousands of Leningraders during the blockade, which would not have happened if we had not fought with Finland” [388].

For Finland, the war with the USSR, in addition to heavy human and material losses, ended in the loss of vast territories, including 11% of its arable land, which immediately sharply aggravated the food problem in this country. Suffice it to say that if during the "Winter War" bread was sold freely in Finland, then immediately after its end, bread cards were introduced there [389]. But on the other hand, the Finns managed to defend their independence, and this is worth a lot. The scenario according to which the events in Finland were supposed to go is well known in the case of the Baltic states, where it was fully realized.

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ACCESSION OF BESSARABIA AND NORTHERN BUKOVINA

In the second half of June 1940, the problem of returning to the bosom of the Soviet country of Bessarabia, as well as Northern Bukovina, which had never been part of Russia and was not assigned to the sphere of Soviet interests by Soviet-German agreements, was rather quickly resolved. As early as March 30, 1940, Molotov announced the existence of an unresolved controversial issue of Bessarabia, which was captured by Romania in January 1918. In case Romania did not make concessions, the issue was to be resolved by force. In order to defeat the Romanian troops, enveloping strikes by the troops of the 12th Army were planned from the area north of Chernivtsi along the river. Prut on Iasi and 9th

army from the Tiraspol region to Khushi. Parts of the 5th Army were also involved in the operation. In order to encircle the Romanian troops, it was also planned to drop an airborne corps in the Balti-Iasi region. 120 TB-3 planes, accompanied by 300 fighters, were prepared to attack airfields and enemy troops. Following the air strikes, it was planned to land the 201st, 204th and 214th airborne brigades. In total, at the final stage of the operation in the Tirgu Frumos area, it was planned to land 2040 people.

According to the already developed scenario, measures were taken to covertly strengthen the grouping of troops in the Odessa military district. Troops from neighboring districts and from the depths of the country began to be drawn there. It is believed that military preparations began on June 9, 1940, with the receipt of directives by the People's Commissar of Defense OU / 583 and OU / 584 by the Military Councils of the KOVO and OdVO. However, the facts say otherwise. So, already on April 10, by NPO directive No. 0/2/104062, the Military Council of the BOVO was ordered to transfer a number of artillery units to the Odessa Military District by April 25. Among them, on May 3, 1940, the 120th Gap b / m was redeployed in full force to the Romanian border in the area of the city of Kolomyia. In order to save rolling stock, almost all tractors were left in place. There the regiment was understaffed according to the states of wartime.

The 120th gap of the b / m in the state No. 08/3, numbering 2697 people with an art park in the state No. 08/22, numbering 169 people. This was not an ordinary redeployment to another district, since after the peaceful resolution of the conflict, the regiment was again returned to BOVO.

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On June 26, at 10 p.m., Molotov handed over to the Romanian envoy Davidescu in Moscow a note from the Soviet government on the return of Bessarabia with an ultimatum that the Red Army would otherwise start hostilities on June 28. K. On June 27, 1940, the troops concentrated on the Romanian border were fully prepared for combat operations. But they weren't needed. At 11:00 p.m. on June 27, Moscow received a reply from Bucharest agreeing to make concessions, and at 11:00 a.m. on June 28, 1940, the Romanian government finally agreed to the conditions for the evacuation of its troops from the territory mentioned in the ultimatum. -

On June 28, at 1400, the advanced units of the Southern Front crossed the border and on the same day occupied Chernovtsy, Khotin, Baltsy, Kishinev and Akkerman. As usual, the actions of the Soviet troops were presented to the Soviet people as "the liberation of the working people of Bessarabia and the northern part of Bukovina from the oppression of the Romanian boyars." During the withdrawal of the Romanian troops, it was important to prevent the removal and destruction of material values, the destruction of important life support facilities, the creation of disorder and robberies. To this end, a quick exit of mobile mechanized units to the new border was planned in order to ensure control over the withdrawal of Romanian troops from Bessarabia. However, due to insufficient organization and poor training of pontooners of the mechanical unit

delayed crossing the river. Dniester.

Although the matter did not come to hostilities, the Bessarabian campaign gave some practical experience to the command and staff in preparing offensive operations, in directing large masses of troops when they advanced in anticipation of meeting with the enemy, which the Red Army lacked so much. During the advance of the troops, a number of major shortcomings were revealed. Including the poor work of headquarters of all levels in organizing the march and the regulation service, insufficient training of personnel for marches over long distances, including at night. As a result, a large number of stragglers of the Red Army turned out to be in the units. The command staff of the engineering units failed to organize the work on the arrangement of crossings and the construction of bridges. The ground troops turned out to be completely untrained in interaction with aviation and did not have the means to communicate with it.

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ANNEXATION OF THE BALTICS AND SOVIETIZATION OF THE NEWLY ACCESSED TERRITORIES

After successfully resolving the issue with Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, the Soviet leadership decided that the time had come to put into effect the agreements enshrined in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and subsequent Soviet-German agreements. At the end of September 1939, it began to put open pressure on the Baltic states in order to force them to conclude mutual assistance treaties and allow them to establish Soviet military bases on their territory. The negotiations were held in Moscow, Molotov led them from the Soviet side, but Stalin also took the most direct part in them. In the course went the policy of not only the stick, but also the carrot. Thus, Lithuania was offered to hand over Vilnius, which had just been taken from Poland. In the conditions of the already begun World War II, the Balts could not count on anyone's help. And they didn't have any fortifications comparable to the Mannerheim Line, and the armed forces had no chance of resisting the Red Army. Unable to withstand the threats, reinforced by the demonstration of impressive military force on the borders, on September 28, Estonia, on October 5, Latvia and on October 10, Lithuania were forced to sign the treaties demanded of them with the Soviet Union.

According to these agreements, Soviet troops were introduced into the territory of the Baltic states: 25,000 men each to Estonia and Latvia, and 20,000 to Lithuania. If we take into account that these countries' own peacetime armed forces numbered 20, 25, and 28,000, respectively, it becomes clear what a powerful leverage the USSR received to influence their domestic and foreign policy. However, initially the Soviet leadership did not use this

lever arm. It was emphatically neutral and did not allow itself any interference in the internal affairs of the Baltic countries. This was explained by the unclear international situation. No one then knew exactly how and when the confrontation between Germany and England and France would end, so the Soviet Union behaved with extreme caution.

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The situation changed radically when large-scale battles flared up in the West, and all at once it became not up to Eastern Europe. The hands of the USSR turned out to be completely untied, and it began to take more active steps. To begin with, the Lithuanians were accused of forcibly kidnapping Red Army soldiers. Cases of disappearances of servicemen from military bases stationed in Lithuania did occur, but their reasons were much more prosaic. I must say that the best were selected for service in the Baltic states, abroad of the USSR. For example, before the entry of Soviet troops into Estonia on September 30, 1939, Voroshilov ordered:

"The personnel of the troops being sent to Estonia should be carefully checked, the best rank and file should be allocated for this, the most trained commanding staff, especially the commissar and political ones, should be provided, and the units should be supplied with service weapons and property. The troops should be well-equipped, paying due attention to quality and fit" [390].

Red Army soldiers were strictly forbidden to communicate with the local population. But it turned out to be impossible to completely prevent human contacts, especially since there were so many temptations around: unprecedented life abroad, shops with an abundance of various goods, and, finally, beautiful girls. Therefore, cases of unauthorized departures from the unit and even desertion were by no means rare. The fact that these phenomena at that time were far from isolated in nature is evidenced by the appearance on December 7, 1940 of a special resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR "On bringing to justice traitors to the motherland and members of their families." According to it, family members of defectors were actually turned into hostages and punished by exile "to remote northern regions" for a period of 3 to 5 years with confiscation of property [391].

The Soviet leadership used the cases of disappearance of servicemen for their own purposes, accusing the Lithuanian authorities of hostile actions unfounded. In addition, without the slightest justification, it accused them of concluding a secret military alliance between Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, contrary to the Soviet-Lithuanian treaty.

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On the basis of these accusations, the USSR demanded a change in the government of Lithuania and the introduction of additional military units there. All this was accompanied by a real twisting of the arms, up to the establishment of a sea and air blockade of the Baltic states. The Lithuanians had before their eyes the example of Finland, where the Soviet Union achieved its goals, regardless of any victims, either their own or others. They did not at all want a repetition of such events on their soil, and therefore, on June 15, they gave in to Soviet demands. On the same day, the Red Army began to occupy Lithuania. Two days later similar events took place in Latvia and Estonia.

And then the open process of Sovietization of the Baltic began, reinforced by numerous bayonets, cannons and tanks of the Red Army stationed on its territory. To manage this process, special representatives of the USSR government were sent to each country, endowed with special powers: to Lithuania - Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V.G. Dekanozov, to Latvia - Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR. Ya. Vyshinsky, in Estonia - member of the Politburo and secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks A.A. Waiting for new. Under the guidance of such experienced and skillful "bison" events began to develop very quickly.

First of all, new governments were formed, unconditionally loyal to the USSR. Then there were demonstrations and rallies with pro-Soviet slogans. And on July 5, resolutions on holding parliamentary elections were issued simultaneously in all three countries. At the same time, only nine days were allotted for the entire election campaign. To exclude any surprises, the entire election process was carefully thought out and organized in advance. At the same time, their organizers paid very little attention to the constitutions and laws then in force in the Baltic countries. As early as July 6, the creation of "Unions of the Working People" in Lithuania and Estonia and a similar "Bloc of the Working People" in Latvia was announced. Only candidates who belonged to these organizations could count on winning the elections. The rest were simply not allowed to see them, using a system of tricks and chicanery. The elections became essentially non-alternative.

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The skillfully selected composition of the election commissions and committees guaranteed the appropriate results, fully consistent with Soviet traditions. In Lithuania, 99.2% of the voting participants voted for the candidates of the pro-Soviet bloc, in Latvia - 97.8%, and in Estonia - 92.8% [392]. At the same time, even the social and national composition of the future parliaments was planned in advance and presented to Stalin for review. It is not at all surprising that such sham parliaments, at their very first meeting on July 21, proclaimed their countries Soviet socialist republics. At the same time, they asked the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to accept them into the Soviet Union in

as a union republic. On August 3-6, 1940, at the UP session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of the 1st convocation, their requests were granted. So the Baltic republics became part of the Soviet Union. However, from the very beginning they looked like alien organisms there.

How much the Soviet leadership did not trust the armies and population of the annexed Baltic countries can be understood from an excerpt from a memo from the commander of the BOVO troops, General Pavlov, dated June 21, 1940, addressed to Timoshenko:

"I make the following suggestions:

First. Disarm the armies of all 3 states and withdraw weapons to the Soviet Union.

Second. or After the purge of the officers and the strengthening of the units by our command staff - I admit the possibility at first - in the near future to use units of the Lithuanian and Estonian armies for the war - outside the BOVO, approximately - against the Romanians, Afghans! and the Japanese.

In all cases, I consider it necessary to disarm the Latvians fully.

Third, After the armies are finished, immediately (48 hours) disarm the entire population of all 3 countries.

Execute for failure to hand over weapons" [393].

But Pavlov's proposal was not accepted. Instead, on August 17, an order from People's Commissar Timoshenko appeared:

' So in the text.

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"1. The existing armies in the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian SSRs should be preserved for a period of 1 year, cleared of unreliable elements and transformed each army into a rifle territorial corps, bearing in mind that the commanders will complete the assimilation of the Russian language and military retraining during this period, after which the territorial corps should be replaced by extraterritorial ones, formed on a common basis.

Name the buildings:

a) Estonian Corps - 22nd Rifle Corps,

6) Latvian Corps - 24th Rifle Corps,

c) Lithuanian Corps - 29th Rifle Corps" [394].

Not only the armies, but also all the peoples of the Baltic States had to go through a long and difficult process of complete sovietization, accompanied by considerable sacrifices.

And on the former Polish territory, it began even earlier. The official reunification of Western Belarus with Soviet Belarus, and Western Ukraine with Soviet Ukraine took place on November 2, 1939. Large estates and enterprises were immediately nationalized. Farm laborers received land and material assistance. Then they pressed the middle strata of the population, small traders and entrepreneurs, and artisans. According to official historians, "the Soviet people rendered great help to their Ukrainian and Belorussian brothers. Dozens of echelons with food, industrial consumer goods, machinery and medicines were sent there. But the fighters and commanders of the Red Army, and later their family members, immediately noticed that compared with the life of workers in the Union with its rationing system for food and the constant shortage of consumer goods, the situation of the "liberated" residents was much better. These sentiments were recorded in the relevant reports of the NKVD and caused serious concern of the authorities.

The population of the newly annexed regions met with alarm some of the measures taken by the new government. The land was given to the farm laborers, but collective farms were immediately organized, which the peasants did not like. However, open repressions caused particular dissatisfaction of the local population.

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in relation to "alien and counter-revolutionary" elements. First of all, captured and interned officers and employees of the Polish army and police were imprisoned in concentration camps. Later, as officially recognized by the Government of the USSR, by decision of the Politburo headed by Stalin, they were basically all shot. When the mass graves of the executed Poles were discovered near Katyn, the executioners from the NKVD, headed by Beria, tried to blame this heinous crime on the Germans.

Planned cleansing of new territories. began at the end of 1939. It was carried out in several stages. First, employees of the Polish state apparatus were arrested and isolated almost without exception. On February 10, 1940, the mass deportation of the bulk of foresters, osadniks and their families began. According to the certificate of the NKVD of the USSR dated February 11, 1940, on the number of evicted foresters and osadniks, at that time 20,509 families, or 108,838 people, were evicted. The operation involved 51,967 people, including 10,747 operational workers [395].

To carry out such a large-scale action, in addition to the organs and operational units of the NKVD, personal

new composition of the army. For example, Lieutenant N.I. Kondrashin from the 120th Gap with a group of soldiers of his battery in the amount of six people was sent to st. [Oryn (Rechitsa). According to the order, on the night of February 10, 1940, exactly at 24:00, he opened the secret package, which said that his group was placed at the disposal of the military commander of the city of Rechitsa. For several days they took the families of siegemen and foresters to trains at the station, from where they were sent to the north of the country, to the Urals and Siberia. Then it came to the destruction of monuments to soldiers and officers of the Polish army who died during the Soviet-Polish war of 1918-1920. In the spring of 1940, a beautiful memorial was destroyed in a military town on the outskirts of Pinsk. Of course, it was not possible to save it, since at the very top of a high and massive stele two colorful

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Osadniks are settlers from the western and central regions of Poland. They received large plots of land, loans and privileges of various kinds, and were the backbone of the Polish regime, established as a result of the unfortunate outcome of the 1920 war for us.

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bronze bas-reliefs with an inscription, in the text of which, in particular, it was said: "<...> fallen in battles with the gangs of Budyonny and Voroshilov." The monument was desecrated and then blown up.

One can imagine how all this affected the mood of the Poles (and not only them - both Belarusians and Ukrainians served in the Polish army) with their heightened sense of homeland, which was captured by neighbors for the fourth time in history. According to a similar scheme, Sovietization took place in the Baltic countries. It is not surprising that by the spring of 1941, a certain part of the population of the newly annexed territories had developed anti-Soviet sentiments. The Germans skillfully used these moods to plant espionage and sabotage groups on our territory. Elements of the Polish, Ukrainian and Belorussian population of the occupied part of Poland, the Moldavians from Bessarabia and the inhabitants of the Baltic states, hostile to the Soviet government, developed extensive sabotage activities in the Red Army from the beginning of the war.

As a summary, it can be noted that participation in local conflicts with the Chinese on the CER, with the Japanese at Lake Khasan and on the river. Khalkhin Gol, due to the limited scale of hostilities, did little for the Red Army in terms of acquiring combat experience. The war with Finland stands apart. It became an icy shower for the Soviet political and military leadership and quickly sobered up many hotheads. This war turned out to be quite different from the September campaign in Western Ukraine and Western Belarus. Then the few attempts of resistance by the Poles were quickly crushed by the Soviet units,

having an overwhelming numerical superiority in manpower and technology, and the local residents for the most part joyfully greeted the Red Army soldiers with bread and salt, flowers and hugs. At that time, all this was perceived by many as a convincing confirmation of the then state ideology, which assumed that the future war would be, first of all, a class character. Therefore, it was expected that the majority of the population of the countries with which the USSR would have to fight would belong to the Red Ar

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missions as their liberator, and their armies, deprived of the support of their people, will inevitably suffer a crushing defeat. In Finland, the Red Army soldiers, to their considerable surprise, saw a completely different attitude towards themselves from the local population. There they met their first truly serious opponent. The Main Directorate of Political Propaganda of the Red Army, in a memorandum addressed to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks in January 1941, was forced to admit:

"The liberation campaigns of the Red Army in Western Ukraine and Western Belarus in 1939 and in Bessarabia and the Baltic states in 1940 gave rise to a number of incorrect interpretations about the international tasks of the Red Army, about the strength of our probable enemies. A harmful prejudice is deeply rooted that, in the event of war, the population of the countries at war with us will necessarily and almost without exception rise up against their bourgeoisie, and it will remain for the Red Army to march through the country of the enemy in a triumphal march and establish Soviet power.

In addition, the course of hostilities and especially unsuccessful battles in December on the Karelian Isthmus revealed major shortcomings in the training of Soviet troops, primarily in the field training of personnel. But even more flaws were found in the training of command personnel in matters of organization and preparation of an operation (combat), command and control of formations and units, and especially in the organization of reconnaissance, communications, interaction and material support for troops. This applied to commanders of both tactical and operational levels. Many days of fighting on the "Mannerheim Line" and in the northern forests, the huge losses of Soviet troops in people and military equipment received wide international publicity. All this had a negative effect on the prestige of the Soviet Union and its army.

Stalin immediately took drastic measures. On April 21, at a meeting of the Main Military Council following the results of the war, he demanded "to peck at the kulg of admiration for the experience of the Civil War, it consolidates our backwardness" [397]. On May 7, 1940, he removed his faithful

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colleague K.E. Voroshilov'. The "winner of the White Finns" S.K. was appointed to this post. Timoshenko, who was awarded the rank of marshal.

Measures were taken to strengthen unity of command, to maintain order among the troops and to strengthen the combat training of the troops. Most of the training was now done in the field, on ranges and shooting ranges in all weathers. There was almost no time for rest. Classes were especially intense in schools for junior specialists in district and attached units (regimental schools), where junior commanders and specialists of military branches (scouts, topographers, calculators, radio operators, telephone operators, car drivers and tractor operators) were trained. Gun commanders were also trained here, who, before being transferred to the reserve, were given the rank of junior lieutenants.

The requirements for the discipline of personnel have become much tougher. In anticipation of hostilities during the liberation of Bessarabia, on June 23, 1940, the troops of the Odessa and Kyiv military districts announced an order "On the application of wartime laws for crimes of military personnel." The laws of war were to be applied until further notice. In particular, a Red Army soldier and a sergeant could receive a month of a disciplinary battalion for every hour of unauthorized absence, a commander - a year in prison for every day of evading official duties.

In the commander training classes, the experience of fighting in the West was studied, where Hitler utterly defeated France in six weeks. In the military press at that time one could come across rather instructive articles, which covered certain issues of the use of German tank units during the battles in Poland and France. Command-staff and military exercises were often held in border districts and formations in their areas of operational assignment. They were involved, as a rule, and parts of the military branches, subordinated in peacetime in organizational and operational

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But Stalin did not want to lose control over the military from his hands, and the Politburo immediately appointed the mediocre military leader as chairman of the Defense Committee, to which the people's commissars of defense and the Navy, as well as all the people's commissariats of the defense industry, were subordinate.

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nominal relations with the respective armies. Troops and staffs basically learned how to organize and conduct offensive battles. Much more time was devoted to working out actions in the winter, especially ski training. These skills were very useful to Soviet soldiers and commanders during the Great Patriotic War.

At the same time, unjustifiably little attention was paid to the organization and conduct of defense. Thus, in the 4th Army (commanded by Lieutenant General V.I. Chuikov), which covered the Brest direction, in the fall of 1940, an operational game was held on the ground - the only one during which defense issues were worked out. Under the pressure of the superior forces of the "enemy", the formations of the army withdrew fighting from line to line to the old border. In the end, the "enemy" grouping that invaded our territory was defeated. We note that six months later, in the same direction, the Germans traveled 400-450 km in one week and captured Minsk and Bobruisk on June 28.

Unfortunately (we often have to use this expression in relation to our army), there was not enough time to eliminate the identified shortcomings in the combat training of troops and the operational training of command personnel and staffs before the start of the war. They undoubtedly affected the tragic results of the border battle for the Red Army, and left their cruel imprint on the entire first half of the war.

Chapter 5

GERMAN PLANS FOR WAR WITH THE USSR

PLAN DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS BARBAROSSA

After the defeat of France, England became Hitler's primary target. He really hoped that the crushing thunder of the French army and the British expeditionary force would bring this country to its knees, but he had to be convinced of the fallacy of his calculations. As early as June 4, 1940, as the fighting in France was drawing to a close, the new British Prime Minister, Churchill, publicly declared that England would continue the fight against the Nazis "if necessary, for years, if necessary, alone" [398]. Hitler soon realized that these were not empty words, and on July 16, 1940, he ordered to start developing a plan for the landing of troops on its territory, which received the code name "Sea Lion". He did not refuse other ways to lead England out of the war. On July 19, the Fuhrer delivered a long speech in the Reichstag, in which peace proposals were made. Despite the dire situation in which the British found themselves after the loss of all their allies in Europe and the loss of a large part of the trained army, as well as almost all the heavy weapons at Dunkirk, the British Foreign Secretary Halifax, on behalf of his government, publicly rejected the German peace initiative. In a speech broadcast on the radio, he said:

"We never wanted this war, and certainly none of us wants it to last even one extra day. The Nomes will not stop fighting until we secure freedom both for ourselves and for others" [399].

Meanwhile, the position of England did not at all inspire optimism; her dependence on imports was too great. By

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After the capture of French and Norwegian ports, the Germans significantly improved their strategic position, greatly stretching the chain of the English naval blockade and thereby reducing its density. At the same time, their U-boats were given many convenient outlets to British communications. England's economic situation no longer allowed any hope of winning a long war of attrition with Germany alone. It was obvious that the hope for the help of the United States or for a change in the position of the USSR gave the British strength to continue the struggle. America at that time pursued a policy of isolationism, did not have a large land army and significant trained manpower reserves. Moreover, it was separated from Europe by the Atlantic Ocean.

But the Soviet Union was a real potential threat to Germany. First of all, the ideologies of these countries were initially hostile, and none of their leaders from the very beginning was at all mistaken about the strength and longevity of the non-aggression pact concluded between the USSR and Germany on August 23, 1939. Each of them sought to extract the maximum benefits from the temporary agreement with the "sworn friend" and would not hesitate to violate it at the moment that he considered advantageous. At the same time, after the partition of Poland, the armies of both countries came into direct contact. Hitler had good reason to believe that after the destruction of Germany's last real rival on the European continent, which was then the Soviet Union, England would come to its senses and finally submit to his will. But this had to be done as soon as possible, before the British could form, equip and train a large enough land army to be able to threaten Germany with a land war on two fronts. The main goal of the Nazi leadership was to smash their enemies one by one, and to smash quickly, because the limited material and human resources of Germany did not allow her to wage a long war of attrition. For the time being, such a strategy brought the Germans impressive military and political successes, which intoxicated them more and more.

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In the case of England, Hitler unexpectedly found himself in a strategic impasse and felt that he was losing initiative and control over the situation. This country, due to its geographical position, was beyond the reach of the victorious German troops, and all approaches to it were securely

winged the mighty British fleet. Something had to be done. As early as June 14, without waiting for the surrender of France, which, however, was already inevitable, Hitler ordered the transfer to peacetime states of 120 land army divisions, of which 20 were armored, and 10 were motorized. The task of bringing the war with England to a victorious end was entrusted to the air force and navy [400]. At the same time, the army was reduced immediately by 39 divisions, as a result, approximately 500 thousand people were released to work in the military industry, which was faced with the task of producing as soon as possible the maximum possible number of the latest warships and aircraft necessary for the final crush of England [401] .

Such a path to victory was quite real, but did not promise quick results, and Hitler did not want to wait. Apart from his understandable reluctance to give England a respite and an opportunity to recover from heavy defeats, he had another major reason to act without delay. The Fuhrer sought to realize all his pre-planned plans for the conquest of Europe even before the time when the United States with its huge economic and military potential could intervene in them. Just at that time, America clearly demonstrated to the whole world that it was beginning serious preparations for war. On July 19, 1940, President Roosevelt signed into law an unprecedented warship building program in the history of the country. Among them were seven lines of cows, six battlecruisers, 18 aircraft carriers, 27 cruisers, 115 destroyers and 43 submarines. This was a significant addition to the American fleet, which already numbered 358 warships of the main classes in service and another 130 under construction [402]. Hitler did not at all flatter himself with the hope that the United States would never dare to oppose him, but correctly calculated that they would not have time to prepare for a big war before 1942. That is why it was absolutely necessary for him to put an end to both England and the Soviet

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the Soviet Union even before that, not so far away. From the beginning, the seizure of "living space" for Germany in the East was supposed to begin only after the establishment of complete hegemony in the west of Europe. But in the situation that had developed, Hitler decided to try to catch up with two birds with one stone: to conquer the USSR and thereby force England to surrender, or at least to peace on German terms.

On July 21, 1940, after another discussion of the details of the future landing in England, the Fuhrer instructed the commander of the German ground forces, Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, to study the possibilities of war with the Soviet Union and present him with his proposals on this issue. Brauchitsch had to proceed from the following considerations:

1. The total concentration of the invading army was given from four to six weeks.

2. The military goal of the operation was to defeat the Red Army or capture such a large territory of the USSR that military factories in the eastern part of Germany, especially in Berlin and Silesia, as well as oil production areas in Romania, became inaccessible to Soviet aviation. At the same time, all the important industrial centers of the European part of the Soviet Union were to be within the range of the Luftwaffe.

3. The political goals of the operation included the creation of an independent Ukraine, Belarus, a federation of the Baltic states and an increase in the territory of Finland.

4. Forces consisting of 80-100 divisions were allocated for the operation. At the same time, the forces of the Red Army in the European part of the USSR were estimated at 50-75 combat-ready divisions. In the event of a campaign against the Soviet Union starting next autumn, part of the German aviation concentrated against England was planned to be transferred to the east [403].

The next day, Brauchitsch brought this information to the Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces (OKH), Colonel General Halder, and ordered him to analyze the situation and present an outline of a plan for a future campaign. He immediately requested from Lieutenant Colonel Kinzel, head of the Vostok department of foreign armies, information about the number and deployment of Soviet troops. The flywheel of preparations for a future major war in the East began to gain momentum.

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At the same time, at the end of July, it became completely clear to the German leadership that a landing in England would become possible no earlier than mid-September 1940. Only by this time would the fleet be able to prepare sufficient forces and means for landing on a wide front. But when this deadline approached, it turned out that the Germans failed to create the necessary prerequisites for the implementation of Operation Sea Lion. Despite all the efforts and expended resources, the Luftwaffe never managed to defeat the British aviation and gain air supremacy. Therefore, on September 17, the landing in England was postponed indefinitely. But even earlier, on July 31 at the Berghof, at the end of a conference devoted mainly to Operation Sea Lion, Hitler announced for the first time to a wide circle of people that the war with Russia would take place next spring. Halder detailed the main points of his speech in his diary:

"<...> We will not attack England, but we will shatter those illusions that give England the will to resist. Then we can hope for a change in her position. The war itself has been won. France has fallen away from the "British Lion". Italy pins down British troops. Submarine and air warfare may decide the outcome of the war, but it will last a year or two.

England's hope is Russia and America. If hopes for Russia collapse, America will also fall away from England, since the defeat of Russia will result in an incredible strengthening of Japan in East Asia.

<...> England especially counts on Russia. Something happened in London! The English were completely discouraged, now they suddenly perked up again.

<...> Russia is dissatisfied with the rapid development of events in Western Europe. It is enough for Russia to tell England that she does not want to see Germany too [strong] for the British to cling to this statement like a drowning man at straws and begin to hope that in six or eight months things will turn out quite differently.

If Russia is defeated, England will lose her last hope. Then Germany will dominate Europe and the Balkans.

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Conclusion: In accordance with this reasoning, Russia must be liquidated. Deadline - spring 1941.

The sooner we defeat Russia, the better. The operation will make sense only if we defeat the entire state with one swift blow. Just capturing some part of the territory is not enough.

<...> The existence of a second great power [Russia] on the Baltic Sea is intolerable. Beginning - May 1941. The duration of the operation is five months. It would be better to start already this year, but this is not suitable, since it is necessary to carry out the operation with one blow. The goal is to destroy the life force of Russia.

The operation is divided into:

1st strike: Kyiv, access to the Dnieper; aviation destroys crossings. Odessa.

2nd strike: Through the Baltic states to Moscow; in the future, a bilateral strike - from the north and south; later - a private operation to seize the Baku region" [404].

To implement this vast plan, Hitler had to reverse his recent decision to reduce the land army. On the contrary, he decided to form another 40 divisions and, together with those 20 whose personnel were temporarily released on leave, to increase its strength to 180 divisions, including 25 tank and 12 motorized divisions, no later than the beginning of May of the following year [405]. Based on the intelligence information received from Kinzel, Halder concluded that the most promising was an offensive from East Prussia and Northern Poland in Moscow

direction. If successful, after the fall of Moscow, Soviet troops in Ukraine and southern Russia would have to fight with an inverted front. However, the preliminary study of Feirabent, the main ideas of which were reported to Alder by his subordinates on July 27, assumed that the main blow would be delivered in Ukraine, south of the Pripyat marshes. For this, it was also planned to use 100 divisions. [Alder] did not like this proposal of his own staff, which was contrary to his own plan, so on July 29 he decided to invite an "outsider" to develop a plan for a campaign against the Soviet Union. Them

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became 49-year-old Major General Erich Marx, who was specially transferred to the OKH from the post of chief of staff of the 18th Army, shortly before transferred to the border with the USSR. And what is remarkable: he had to work completely independently, avoiding extraneous influences.

| August 1940 Halder discussed in detail with Marx the objectives and plans for the campaign. Both agreed that it was necessary to create two main shock groups: one for the attack on Moscow, the other on Kyiv. Halder feared that the southern group would have an unsecured rear if it had to advance from Rumania. He considered the capture of the Baltic states as a secondary goal, which should not interfere with the fulfillment of the main task - the attack on Moscow. As a result of the discussion, Marx was given the task of putting his proposals on paper in detail. Already on August 5, the talented and highly efficient staff officer presented Halder with his plan on 26 pages, which received the name "Ost". Below are his main theses, which were later used in the development of the widely known plan "Barbarossa".

1. The goal of the company: the defeat of the Soviet armed forces, so that the USSR in the foreseeable future could not pose a threat to Germany. It was necessary to capture territories up to the Rostov-Gorky-Arkhangelsk line in order to exclude any possibility for Soviet aviation to strike at German territory. From an economic point of view, the most valuable regions were Ukraine and the Donbass, as well as the industrial regions around Moscow and Leningrad. The main goal is Moscow as the political, economic and spiritual center of the USSR. After its capture, one should expect the collapse of organized resistance.

2. Terrain. To the north and west of Moscow there are extensive forests and swamps. The Pripyat swamps, which are the southern part of this massif, divide the western part of the USSR into two parts. To the south of the Pripyat, the forests are not so dense, but there the lack of good roads and the wide river Dnieper greatly restrict the mobility of the troops. To the north, the road network is denser, but impenetrable forests force combat operations only along major highways.

3. Soviet tactics. It is assumed that the Red Army will defend itself. Only on the border with Romania can you live

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give attempts by the Russians to attack with the aim of capturing the centers for the extraction and processing of oil, as well as attacking them from the air. We should not expect the Russians to repeat the tactics of the war of 1812, when they avoided decisive battles for a long time. It was believed that the Red Army would occupy defensive positions along the Western Dvina - Polotsk - Berezina - the eastern edge of the Pripyat swamps - the Prut or Dniester, based on powerful fortifications prepared in advance there. To the west of this line, only containment actions were foreseen. The retreat of the Red Army to the line of the Dnieper was not ruled out. s

4. Calculation of forces. The German command clearly underestimated the composition of the Red Army: in the western theater of operations, it had 38% more formations than the Germans expected. In table 5.1, the German assessment of the forces of the Red Army in August 1940 is compared with their actual state in September of the same year:

Table 5.1

COMPOSITION AND DISTRIBUTION OF FORCES OF THE RKKA IN AUGUST 1940
(ACCORDING TO THE GERMAN ASSESSMENT)

Composition and distribution of forces of the
Red Army

EP ZI

[cavalry | 23/10 | 84 | - —

mechanized (tank)

Sources: [406].

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Notes:

1. In the numerator - according to the German estimate, in the denominator - the real number of Soviet formations.

2. When calculating the number of equivalent divisions, one brigade was equated to half a division.

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Based on this erroneous assessment, Marx considered it sufficient to use a total of 147 German divisions against the USSR, including 24 tank, 12 motorized, one cavalry and 110 infantry. Their readiness was expected by the spring of 1941.

5. The distribution of Russian forces. The main groupings of Soviet troops, separated by the Pripyat swamps, are divided approximately equally: to the north in the Baltic states and Belarus and to the south in Ukraine, the reserves are concentrated in the Moscow region. Such a distribution of forces was expected in any scenario of a war with Germany. It was assumed that after breaking through the Russian front, stretched over a long distance, they would lose the ability to coordinate actions and be broken up in parts.

Soviet aviation was considered a serious enemy, which should not be underestimated. It was not excluded that her actions, directed against the troops advancing along the few main roads available, could be very effective.

6. Progress of operations. In view of the vast size of the theater of operations (THA) and its division into two parts by the Pripyat marshes, it is unlikely to win the campaign by conducting only one decisive blow. Therefore, it was planned to carry out two independent offensive operations against the main groupings of Soviet troops. In the future, they could merge into one.

It is advisable to concentrate the main forces of the Wehrmacht in the northern part of the theater of operations in order to suppress any resistance in its path and take over Moscow. [The main blow was planned between Brest and Gumbinen in the direction of Rogachev-Vitebsk. The smaller German force, assembled south of Pri Five, was given the task of advancing in the direction of Kyiv. Thus, it was supposed to prevent the Russian attack on Romania, and at the same time to form the southern part of the pincers, which would close east of the headwaters of the Dnieper. On the northern flank of the operations, auxiliary forces were to advance across the Baltic in the Leningrad direction and capture the Russian naval bases on the coast of the Baltic Sea.

a) Attack in the south. The offensive in Ukraine had the main goal of protecting Romanian oil. In case of nane

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the main attack from Romania, and the auxiliary ones from

northeastern Hungary and southeastern Poland, this operation had a chance to develop into a major offensive across the Dnieper to Moscow. But the political situation in the Balkans and the sparse road network of Romania and Hungary did not allow the necessary forces and means to be concentrated in time to start the campaign. A strike only from southeastern Poland in the direction of Kiev was considered possible, but remained limited due to the lack of room for maneuver and the excessively long distance to Moscow.

For the offensive in the south were needed. "Sufficiently large forces capable of destroying Russian troops in Western Ukraine and reaching the left bank of the Dnieper. The direction of further advance had to be coordinated with the development of the main operation in the northern part of the theater. It could go to Kharkov or to the southeast, but Kyiv was the main target in any scenario. Auxiliary forces, operating from Romanian territory, were to link up with the main grouping in the region of the middle reaches of the Dnieper. The Romanian army was assigned a role in the occupation of Bessarabia, Odessa and Crimea. |

6) The main blow. The purpose of the main attack was to destroy the Russian forces located to the west of Moscow, as a result of a direct attack on it. After capturing the capital and the northern part of Russia, part of the main forces were to turn south and capture Ukraine in cooperation with the southern group. The main offensive was planned from East Prussia and northern Poland to Moscow, since the decisive operation could not begin in Rumania, and the initial attack in the direction of Leningrad only lengthened the path to Moscow and led into dense forests located north of Moscow. The left flank of the group advancing on Moscow was covered by troops advancing through the Western Dvina towards Pskov and Leningrad. After the capture of the latter, they had to act jointly with the main forces.

The road and rail network west of the Russian border was sufficiently developed to supply troops advancing on Moscow. But the terrain on the path of these troops was unfavorable. They had to cross the vast forest and lake region between the Western Dvina and the Dnieper, so the struggle for transport areas became decisive.

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teria. The task of the airborne troops was to seize the eastern exits from the forest zone and keep the roads open for the main forces.

c) maneuver. Since speed and surprise were the most important prerequisites for the success of an offensive, tank and motorized troops, supported by aviation, had to break through the enemy defenses, and infantry divisions to follow them without delay, surround and isolate enemy forces. The power of the first attack was limited mainly by the capacity of the roads.

In most cases, no more than two divisions could attack simultaneously along one road, so it was expected that units and formations would have to echelon in depth. The enormous width of the theater of operations dictated the need to have strong mobile reserves that could be quickly transferred to where they were needed.

7. Distribution of German troops. The troops destined for the invasion consisted of two army groups (GA), while the GA Sever was almost twice as many divisions as the GA South, and three times as many in tank divisions. The composition of army groups and reserves is shown in table 5.2:

Table 5.2

GROUPING GERMAN TROOPS

ACCORDING TO MARX'S PLAN

8. Tasks of ground forces. The main goal of the Army Group "South" was the destruction of the Russian forces in the west of Ukraine and the capture of bridgeheads on the Dnieper, from which further advance in the east or northeast direction would be possible. GA "North" was tasked to capture Moscow. To do this, the mobile units were to break through the forests between Rogachev and Vitebsk, and the airborne troops were to ensure their advance at the exit from the forests. In the event that the Russians organized defenses between the initial areas of the German offensive and the forests or the Western Dvina, they were going to push them back with. Moscow direction to the north. At the same time, the German armored and motorized units had to quickly move forward to Moscow itself, without waiting for the destruction of these Russian troops, thrown back from their path.

9. Tasks of the Air Force. The Luftwaffe was instructed to neutralize Soviet aviation, disrupt road and rail transport, prevent the concentration of the Red Army in forest areas, support the offensive of advanced units with dive bombers, prepare landings and cover the most important transport hubs and troops on the march.

10. Tasks of the Navy. The fleet was obliged to neutralize the Soviet Baltic Fleet, ensure uninterrupted delivery of iron ore from Sweden, and establish transportation through the Baltic immediately after the capture of seaports by the army.

11. Supply. To coordinate supplies and organize bases, it was planned to form a special headquarters. The Russians were expected to attempt widespread destruction and destroy warehouses, railroads and bridges. This damage was intended to be reduced by speed and surprise of actions. Appropriate measures were planned to seize bridges and railway stations in Ukraine, Lithuania and Latvia and prevent them.

destruction. All railways east of the former Polish border were to be changed to Western European gauge.

12. Time frame. The most favorable time for the campaign was considered the period from mid-May

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until mid October. But in the case of a mild winter, it might be possible to start it from the first days of May.

All units participating in the operation had to concentrate in a timely manner before the start of hostilities. In the event that the war broke out unexpectedly, the forces belonging to the GA "Sever" needed approximately 10 days to arrive in the areas assigned to them. For the southern grouping, this period was nine days.

The most likely scenario for the initial phase of the campaign was for the Russians to hold back up to 400 km until they reached their prearranged defensive positions. The German infantry divisions needed three weeks to cover this distance. The task of the tank divisions was to advance so rapidly and break through so deeply that the Russians did not have time to occupy their fortifications. The outcome of the entire campaign depended entirely on the success of tank breakthroughs.

It was assumed that the second phase of the campaign would be dominated by the struggle for forests and rivers. Since the depth of this zone is 100-200 km, it took the infantry 2-4 weeks to cross it. At this stage, it was planned that the German army would either achieve a decisive breakthrough or destroy piecemeal the previously defeated Russian forces.

At the third stage of the campaign, it was planned to take Moscow and Leningrad and launch an offensive against the eastern part of Ukraine. For this, it was necessary to pass, respectively, 400 and 320 km. Whether it would be possible to start this stage immediately after the end of the second one depended on many factors, such as the condition of the railways, the combat readiness of tracked and wheeled vehicles, and the degree of previous success. If the Russians had been defeated by that time, a few armored and motorized divisions would have been quite enough to prevent them from recovering. The same forces planned to capture Moscow and Leningrad and break deep into Eastern Ukraine. In the presence of a sufficient number of combat-ready tanks and vehicles, this required 1-2 weeks. However, if a significant part of the Red Army by that time would still be capable of organized resistance, the beginning of the third

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the stage would have to be postponed until sufficient stocks of materiel needed to continue the offensive could be brought up. In this case, this stage would take 3-6 weeks, depending on the time needed to replenish stocks.

In the fourth and final stage of the offensive, the Germans intended to pursue the Russians in the direction of the Don, Volga and Northern Dvina. At the same time, it was necessary to cover 400 km in the south and up to 800 km in the north and center. It was expected that the Soviet command would lose control of its troops after the loss of Kharkov, Moscow and Leningrad, but the complete occupation of all the territories captured at this stage was still impossible and not needed. It was assumed that for this operation there would be quite enough mobile troops and infantry transported by railroads. It took 2-4 weeks to complete this stage.

Thus, it was calculated that the time needed to achieve all the goals set in the campaign in the East would be in the range from nine to 17 weeks. In the event that the Soviet leadership had not collapsed and made peace by that time, the offensive would have to be continued all the way to the Urals. With the destruction of their army and the loss of the most valuable European part of the country, the Soviets were considered incapable of major military operations, but would still be able to organize their government in Asia and continue the war indefinitely.

Marx attached to his plan recommendations for the preparation of the campaign: on the organization of communications, on the construction and improvement of roads, bridges, railway lines and stations, on quartering areas for troops, their formation, equipment and combat training, on the preparation of cartographic materials, etc. d.

On September 3, 1940, the operational department of the OKH, under the leadership of a new chief, Lieutenant General Paulus, began work on the strategic study of the campaign against the Soviet Union, based on the Marx plan "Ost". Marx himself was suspended from further work in

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ground forces headquarters. Interestingly, the planning of a future war with the USSR was carried out in parallel at the headquarters of the Supreme High Command of the Wehrmacht (OKW), which joined this work on July 29, 1940. On this day, the head of its operations department, General of Artillery Jodl, informed the head of the national defense department, Colonel Warlimont, that Hitler decided "once and for all to put an end to the Bolshevik threat by a surprise attack on Soviet Russia at the first

opportunities" [408]. Since the war between the Nazi and Communist ideologies was sooner or later considered inevitable, the Führer decided to launch an offensive immediately, in the autumn of 1940. However, the Chief of Staff of the OKW, Field Marshal Keitel, managed to dissuade him from this adventurous undertaking, convincingly describing the difficulties of the war on the territory of the USSR in the winter. Another strong argument against such a hasty attack was the poorly developed road network in the Polish lands recently captured by Germany. She made it impossible to transfer and supply a sufficiently large group of troops. Hitler reluctantly agreed to postpone the start of the operation until mid-May 1941.

The work of Warlimont's group began with the drafting of a directive code-named "Construction in the East", which had already been approved by Keitel on August 9th. The directive provided for a whole range of measures aimed at creating the necessary conditions for the rapid concentration of troops on the territory of the Polish Governor General and preparing the appropriate infrastructure for them - roads, airfields, barracks, warehouses, communication lines, and so on. Its development was carried out with the strictest secrecy. What worried Warlimont the most was whether England would be finally subjugated by the spring of 1941, or would Germany still have to fight a war on two fronts? Jodl assured him that the campaign against the USSR would be carried out outside

Hitler did not trust Marx because in the early 1930s he

was closely associated with his political opponent, General von Schleicher, who was killed by the Nazis during the "Night of the Long Knives" on June 30, 1934. Therefore, on September 16, 1940, the Fuhrer did not approve the appointment of Marx to the post of Chief of Staff of Army Group Center, and he was sent to troops as division commander.

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depending on the state of affairs in the West [409]. After the completion of work on this directive, the Warlimont group, on Jodl's orders, began to develop their own plan for a campaign against the USSR. Jodl's main goal was to test the OKH's proposals even before they hit Hitler's table, so all work had to be carried out without regard to army planning. Lieutenant Colonel Bernhard von Lossberg was put in charge of it, and after his name this plan became known as the "Lossberg Study". Lossberg himself gave his plan the code designation "Fritz", and later proposed to Jodl a more appropriate name - "Barbarossa". Thus, for the first time, this name surfaced, which later won notoriety [410].

First of all, von Lossberg analyzed all possible scenarios for the actions of the Red Army. The most probable of them were the following:

1. An unexpected attack on the Wehrmacht, which has not yet completed its deployment.
2. Defensive battle in the border areas in order to keep their territory.
3. Withdrawal into the depths of the country in order to stretch the communications of the advancing German army and create difficulties for it with supplies, and then launch a counterattack.

Von Lossberg considered the first option unbelievable. He did not believe in the ability of the Red Army and its command to launch a large-scale offensive in the region of Poland or East Prussia. The maximum activity that he expected from the Soviet troops could be private operations against Finland or Romania. At the same time, an offensive against Finland would have diverted part of the Red Army forces there, and the Wehrmacht's entry into the Leningrad region would create a direct threat to their rear. Actions against Romania, aimed at destroying a vital fuel base for Germany, were expected mainly from the side of Soviet aviation. It was believed that the German troops available in Romania, together with the Romanian army, were strong enough to repel this threat.

Von Lossberg considered the second option to be the most probable: the Red Army would not yield the newly acquired regions of its country without a fight. It is this development

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he, like Marx, considered the most advantageous for the Germans. It allowed them to defeat the bulk of the enemy troops in a border battle, and then simply finish off the remnants of organized resistance.

The last option could present the greatest trouble to the Wehrmacht. In this case, at the border of the Red Army, only deterrent actions would be carried out by rearguard forces. Under their cover, its main forces were able to withdraw without hindrance to lines convenient for defense beyond the Western Dvina and the Dnieper. The Germans really did not want to be faced with the need to break through the positions prepared in advance and occupied by numerous troops, and even covered by wide rivers [411].

Lossberg's Study was completed on 15 September. In contrast to the OKH plan, von Lossberg proposed the use of not two, but three army groups. Two of them were recommended to deliver the main blow to the north of the Pripyat swamps, because it was there that the shortest route to Moscow lay through Smolensk. After the capture of the Smolensk region by the forces of the GA "Center", the further development of the operation depended on the success of the GA "Sever". If the latter had been able to independently continue the offensive against Leningrad, GA "Center" would have thrown all its forces against Moscow. But if GA "North" stalled, GA "Center"

I would have to temporarily stop my offensive and help my neighbor. In Finland, it was planned to concentrate all the forces of the Finns and Germans there in the southern direction, and the offensive on Murmansk was not supposed.

On September 21, Hitler ordered to begin aerial reconnaissance and photography of Soviet territory to a depth of 300 kilometers [412]. The first reconnaissance flights were already carried out in October of the same year, and by June 22, 1941, more than 500 of them took place. commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Theodor Rovel. They were equipped with boosted engines and pressurized cabins and due to this they flew at an altitude of about nine kilometers [413].

Running a little ahead, we note that on May 22, 1941, Halder wrote in his diary:

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“Demonstration of photographs taken by Rovel's squadron over the Russian border areas. Great work is clearly visible to strengthen the defense (especially a fragment of anti-tank ditches) along the border. Numerous trenches for cable communication lines indicate the presence of a continuous defensive line. Aerial photographs confirm our opinion about the determination of the Russians to stay on the border” [414].

But the collection of information was carried out not only by military reconnaissance aircraft. German regular passenger planes flying along the Moscow-Berlin route also reconnoitered objects in their path and even deliberately deviated from the established route in order to expand the observation zone. Not infrequently, German planes landed on Soviet border airfields to collect information about them under the pretext of losing their orientation in training flights. Until the very beginning of the war, Soviet aviation, ground troops and border guards were strictly forbidden to open fire on German aircraft violating the state border. In the directive of the NKVD to the border troops, this ban was justified by the fact that violations by Germany “are of an unintentional nature”, therefore “do not use weapons if German aircraft violate our border” [415]. Thanks to this ban, the Germans had a rare opportunity to collect intelligence information in a calm environment, as in a training ground. The German military attache in Moscow, Koestring, was also given the task of reconnoitering the routes and lines of communication in the directions of attack of the three army groups. The Germans used every opportunity to collect intelligence information about the USSR and its armies.

female forces.

The Operations Department of the OKH completed the strategic

the work of the campaign and presented it to Halder on 29 October. Its authors have come to disappointing conclusions. The large size of the Red Army, the vast size of the Soviet territory intended for occupation, adverse natural conditions and the need to complete the campaign in a short time and with a decisive result, posed insoluble problems for the officers of the OKH.

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But on the other hand, the results of the recent "Winter War" between the USSR and Finland convincingly demonstrated the rather low level of combat capability of the Red Army, which contrasted with the impressive results of the German blitzkrieg in the West against a much more serious, as the Germans believed, enemy. In addition, it was assumed that the population of the newly acquired territories was hostile to the Soviet regime, and the recent large-scale "purges" were considered strong evidence of the presence of widespread opposition in the USSR.

The main themes of the strategic development were the following:

1. Human resources. The initial balance of forces was unfavorable for the Germans. They could field, at best, only 145 divisions, including 19 tank divisions, against about 170 Soviet divisions stationed

in the western part of the USSR, to which numerous reservists were to be added at the beginning of the war. The armies of Romania and Finland could somewhat improve this situation, but they were equipped and trained, especially the Romanians, noticeably worse than the German troops and could not be compared with them in combat effectiveness. The Germans did not consider it possible to underestimate the Soviet soldier and did not expect that the Red Army would fall apart after the first setbacks. It was planned to compensate for the lack of forces by creating superiority in the directions of strikes by weakening the rest of the front.

It was proposed to pay special attention to the measures of disguise and disinformation. The Germans were well aware that their attempts to portray the concentration of huge forces on the Soviet border as a means of diverting the attention of the British from the last preparations for landing on their island could not remain convincing for long. But they expected that, in the end, only the exact date of the start of the operation and the direction of the main attacks would remain secret.

2. Terrain. The sheer size of the future theater was another major problem, especially given the limited strength of the Wehrmacht. The initial length of the front was more than 1,500 km, but as it moved to the east, its width grew like a funnel, and at the Astrakhan-Arkhangelsk line (line AA)

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reached 2500 km. Thus, as one moved eastward, the density of troops steadily decreased, even if one does not take into account the inevitable losses in combat and the need to leave occupying forces behind the lines. Germany mobilized her army in advance, and this gave her a very important advantage at the beginning of the war. But the longer the war went on, the more it lost this advantage, because its replenishment capabilities were much more limited than those of the USSR. It was not clear whether the Red Army was going to fight a decisive battle on the border or planned to retreat, fighting holding battles. The success of the war largely depended on the ability of the Germans from the very beginning to impose their will on the enemy, to prevent him from retreating in an organized manner into the interior of the country and to defeat his main forces in border battles. To do this, it is necessary to carry out operations to encircle and destroy enemy troops, preventing them from SLIDING OUT.

3. Time. Choosing the right timing was more important than ever. The season from May to October was the most suitable in terms of weather. After him, a period of thaw began on the theater of operations, and after it: a harsh winter followed. Therefore, it was necessary to successfully complete operations while the weather remained favorable. During this time, it was necessary to overcome the distance from 800 to 1000 km. From the start of the campaign, time has been and remains the most important factor.

4. Intelligence data. German intelligence revealed two main

major groupings of Soviet troops: one, numbering up to 70 divisions, in the Ukraine, and another in Belarus, consisting of about 60 divisions. Another 30 divisions were stationed in the Baltic. But it was not clear whether they would want to fight on the frontier or whether they would withdraw inland. It was assumed, however, that the Soviet command did not plan to retreat further than the borders of the Dnieper and Western Dvina in order to preserve their important industrial centers.

5. Theater analysis. It was noted that south of the Pripyat swamps the road network is sparse, while the main highways run along the rivers and are directed from north to south. There were more roads in the north, and at the same time, between Moscow and Warsaw, the best highways and railways were laid from west to east - just in the direction of the German offensive.

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On the Leningrad direction, the roads were also relatively good. At the same time, in the south, the advancing troops had to overcome wide rivers: the Dniester, the Bugi Dnieper, and in the north there was only one significant water barrier - the Western Dvina.

It was obvious that the Red Army would not give up its capital without a fight, so a strike on Moscow made it possible to achieve decisive goals. On the contrary, the territories south of Pripyat were not of great military value. There, Soviet troops had the opportunity to sacrifice space, gaining time, and withdraw beyond the Dnieper. On the other hand, in the south were: the grain of Ukraine, the coal of the Donbass, and behind them the Caucasian oil. But the main goal of the Wehrmacht was that military victory, and not material acquisitions. Winning the entire campaign made it possible at the same time to successfully solve economic problems. Therefore, the operational department of the OKH came to the conclusion that the main efforts should be concentrated north of the Pripyat marshes, and the main blow should be delivered through Smolensk to Moscow [416].

The leadership of the OKW had high hopes for the suddenness of the attack. Therefore, as early as September 7, 1940, Jodl gave instructions to the leadership of German intelligence on the basic principles of misleading the Soviet command values:

"1. To disguise the total number of troops in the east, if possible, by spreading rumors and news about an alleged intensive replacement of military formations located in this area. Justify the movement of troops by their transfer to training camps, reorganization, etc.

2. To create the impression that the main direction in our movements has shifted the southern regions (highlighted by us. - Auth.) of the Governor General's, into a protectorate? and Austria, and that the concentration of troops in the north is comparatively low.

v"

5. To explain the work on improving the network of highways and railways and airfields by the need to develop again

' This refers to the part of Poland occupied by the Germans. ? This refers to the part of the Czech Republic occupied by the Germans.

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warned eastern regions, referring to the fact that they are conducted at a normal pace and serve mainly economic purposes" [417].

The commander of the German fleet, Admiral Raeder, was a staunch supporter of bringing the war with England to a victorious end before getting involved in other serious conflicts. Not without his influence, the Nazi leadership decided to make another attempt to solve the problem of neutralizing the USSR for the duration of the fight against England by diplomatic means. The possibility of making him his military ally against Britain was not ruled out. Therefore, on October 17, 1940, Stalin received a written invitation from Ribbentrop for his Soviet colleague V.M. Molotov to arrive in Berlin "to further clarify issues of decisive importance for the future of our peoples and to discuss them in a concrete form" [418]. The delimitation of spheres of influence between Germany, Italy, Japan and the USSR on a global scale was implied.

Stalin immediately understood the transparent hint and on the evening of October 21 answered with his consent to negotiations. On November 12, Molotov, who at that time was not only the people's commissar for foreign affairs, but also held the post of Chairman of the Soviet government, arrived in Berlin to conduct them. His meetings and lengthy conversations with Hitler, Ribbentrop, Goering and Hess lasted two days. Molotov received a tempting offer to join the "Triple Pact" concluded between Germany, Italy and Japan quite shortly before, on September 27th. At the same time, Germany was given dominance in Europe and in the region of the former German colonies in Central Africa, Italy - in North and Northeast Africa, Japan - in East Asia, and the Soviet Union was asked to head to the south of Asia, to the Persian Gulf and towards India. .

Essentially, the Germans were inviting the Soviet Union to participate in the division of the gigantic British Empire, considering its collapse to be an imminent and inevitable event. But Molotov did not feel any particular desire to share the skin of a bear that had not yet been killed and preferred to talk about more topical things. He not only wanted confirmation that the former

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Hitler talking to Molotov in November 1940 in Berlin

the German-Soviet agreement on Finland remains in force, but also demanded additional spheres of influence for the USSR. These were primarily Bulgaria and Türkiye. Molotov was especially stubborn in raising the subject of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. He was also interested in the future fate of Hungary and Romania and the intentions of the Axis powers regarding Yugoslavia and Greece. The Soviet People's Commissar also wished to discuss the right to exit from the Baltic to the North Sea through the straits controlled by Germany. The German leadership regarded all these requests as a serious infringement.

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their fundamental interests. Moreover, Molotov spoke to Hitler as an equal partner, persistently asked him uncomfortable questions and stubbornly did not yield in disputes. The Führer was not accustomed to such treatment, perceiving it as rude and annoying. The negotiations ended in vain.

But the matter did not end there. On the evening of November 25, Molotov invited the German ambassador to Moscow, Schulenburg, to his place and handed him a written statement stating:

“The USSR basically agrees to accept the draft pact of the four powers on their political cooperation and mutual economic assistance, outlined by G. Ribbentrop in his conversation with V.M. Molotov in Berlin on November 13, 1940 and consisting of 4 points, under the following conditions:

1. If German troops are immediately withdrawn from Finland, which represents the sphere of influence of the USSR, in accordance with the Soviet-German agreement of 1939, the USSR undertakes to ensure peaceful relations with Finland, as well as the economic interests of Germany in Finland (export of timber, nickel).
2. If in the coming months the security of the USSR in the Straits is ensured by concluding a pact of mutual assistance between the USSR and Bulgaria, which, by its geographical position, is in the sphere of security of the Black Sea borders of the USSR and the organization of a military and naval base of the USSR in the area of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles on the basis of long term lease.
3. If the center of gravity of the aspiration of the USSR is recognized as the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction towards the Persian Gulf.
4. If Japan gives up its concession rights for coal and oil in Northern Sakhalin on terms of fair compensation.

In accordance with the above, the project should be changed

Protocol to the 4-Power Treaty, presented by Mr. Ribbentrop, on the delimitation of spheres of influence in the spirit of determining the center of gravity of the aspiration of the USSR in the south of Batum and Baku in the general direction to the Persian Gulf.

In the same way, the draft protocol outlined by Mr. Ribbentrop, the Agreement between [Germany, Italy and the USSR on Turkey in the spirit of securing the military and naval base of the USSR near the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, on the basis of

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long-term lease with a 3-power guarantee of Turkey's independence and territory if Turkey agrees to join the 4-powers.

This protocol should provide that in the event of Turkey's refusal to join the four powers [Germany, Italy and the USSR, they agree to work out and implement the necessary military and diplomatic measures, on which a special agreement should be concluded.

Likewise, the following should be adopted: the third secret protocol between the USSR and Germany on Finland; the fourth secret protocol between the USSR and Japan on Japan's renunciation of coal and oil concessions in Northern Sakhalin; the fifth secret protocol between the USSR, Germany and Italy with the recognition that Bulgaria, due to its geographical location, is in the sphere of security of the Black Sea borders of the USSR, in connection with which it is considered politically necessary to conclude a pact on mutual assistance between the USSR and Bulgaria, that neither to what extent it should not affect either the internal regime of Bulgaria, or its sovereignty and independence" [419].

From Hitler's point of view, the USSR paid an unreasonably high price for its entry into an alliance with Germany, and the Fuhrer did not agree to it. He subsequently explained his decision as follows:

"Stalin is smart and cunning. He will increase his demands all the time. From the point of view of Russian ideology, the victory of Germany is unacceptable. Therefore, the solution is to defeat Russia as soon as possible. In two years England will have 0 divisions. This may encourage Russia to move closer to it" [420].

The time when Hitler was ready to make huge concessions for Stalin had already passed by that time. After the thunder of France, the Germans no longer needed to fear for their rear, and along with this, their self-confidence reached an unprecedented height. Stalin, who did not realize in time that the situation had changed radically, by his excessive requests irritated the Fuhrer, who considered Europe as a sphere of his undivided influence. Hitler finally became convinced that the Soviet problem could only be solved by force. On

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The day after Molotov left Berlin, Raeder learned that planning for an attack on the USSR was in full swing and that his attempts to dissuade Hitler from this adventure had ended in vain. Germany's aggression against the USSR became inevitable.

In accordance with the plan in Germany, the formation, equipment and training of new divisions was continuously going on. In the same month, for the first time in the USSR, something was suspected and an official request was made to the German embassy in Moscow about the excessive concentration of German forces on Polish territory adjacent to the Soviet border. The Germans hypocritically assured in response that the movement of troops was random and connected with their transfer to rest after the end of the campaign in the West, with the requirements of the occupation of Poland and with suitable conditions for combat training in these areas.

Finally, on December 5, Brauchitsch and Halder presented their plan to Hitler, then code-named Otto. According to him, three main groupings of German ground forces were being created in the East. GA "North" was supposed to advance from East Prussia to Leningrad, GA "Center" - through Smolensk to Moscow, and GA "South" - to Kyiv. The main goal of the campaign was to reach the Volga and the Arkhangelsk region. 105 infantry and 32 tank and motorized divisions were intended for the offensive. It took eight weeks to concentrate them. It is interesting to note that, according to the Germans themselves, about a month before its completion, it will no longer be possible to hide preparations for an invasion from the Russians.

Hitler agreed to the plan, but emphasized the importance of preventing the Russians from retreating inland and the need to destroy their army in a frontier battle so that they would never recover. Therefore, the main type of maneuver should have been envelopment and detour with the aim of encircling the enemy next. Army Groups "North" and "Center" were to work closely with each other, while GA "South" was to go on the offensive later than the rest, with the task of encircling and destroying the Russian forces in Ukraine. At that time, Hitler did not yet consider the capture of Moscow to be particularly important, so he did not accept the final decision.

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decisions on the further direction of the German offensive after the main forces of the Red Army in the Baltic, Belarus and Ukraine will be finished. To win the campaign, he considered it sufficient to use 130-140 divisions.

Hitler also announced that the armies of Romania and Finland would take part in the operation together with the Wehrmacht. In the Far North, a group of three German divisions [42] was supposed to strike.

The presented plan was tested in a team-post game held under the leadership of Paulus. It was attended by the chiefs of departments of the OKH, as well as the general of the Luftwaffe attached to the commander in chief of the army. The game was divided into three stages. The first of these began on November 29, 1940. It practiced the invasion itself and the frontier battle, and then held "a discussion of operational possibilities after the achievement of the first operational goal" [422]. At the second stage, which began on December 3, offensive operations were played out until reaching the Kiev-Minsk-Chudskoye Lake line. The theme of the last, third stage, starting from December 7, was further possible options for action. After the completion of each stage, Paulus noted the milestones reached, the state of the troops, the supply situation, intelligence data, etc. At the third stage, it became completely clear that the available forces would hardly be sufficient to hold the ever-expanding front of the offensive if the Red Army retained the capacity for organized resistance.

The games revealed many weaknesses in German operational planning. It turned out that the fulfillment of the task of occupying the Baltic states could lead the Sever Civil Aviation to a serious lag behind the Central Civil Aviation. It also turned out that in the case of concentrating its main forces in Romania, the GA "South" would experience considerable difficulties with deployment and problems with control. Therefore, southern Poland was chosen as the main springboard for its offensive. The main task of both of these army groups was to provide reliable cover for the flanks of the GA "Center" in order to ensure its rapid advance towards the key goal - Moscow. At the same time, in the GA "Center" a lack of infantry units was revealed

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necessary for the successful creation of a "cauldron" in the Minsk region. The infantry had to form the inner front of the encirclement as quickly as possible in order to enable the mobile units to move forward without delay.

In addition, it turned out that after the completion of the first stage of the offensive and reaching the line of the Dnieper south of Kiev, and further north along the Rogachev-Orsha-Vitebsk-Velikiye Luki-Pskov-Pyarnu line, the troops would need an operational pause of up to three weeks to bring themselves in order after previous battles, to establish supplies and pull up supplies. Then, on the 40th day of the operation, the Wehrmacht was to launch a decisive offensive against Moscow [423].

Paulus reported the results of the game to Halder. Around the same time, staff exercises were held, in which the supply plan was worked out, which was part of the country

the strategic study of the campaign, made by the operations department of the OKH. At the same time, special attention was paid to the organization of effective supply of troops in the areas of their concentration and the creation of an effective storage system capable of reliably ensuring the supply of everything necessary for the army during future large-scale offensive operations.

Simultaneously with these exercises, but independently of them, the chiefs of staff of all three army groups were given the task of starting to work out plans for a campaign against the USSR. Halder brought them up to date, but did not reveal all the details of the upcoming operation, but limited their tasks to the defeat of the Red Army forces in Belarus and Western Ukraine. Paulus provided them with all the information they needed, under the condition that they should look for solutions to all problems without consulting their colleagues. The results of their work were ready at the beginning of December and carefully studied by Halder and Paulus. For a detailed discussion of all fresh ideas, a conference of the chiefs of staff of the armies and army groups was held on December 13-14 in the OKH. As a result of the discussions at this meeting, it was possible to clarify many problems that could not be solved before. But the conclusion was made, to put it mildly, too optimistic: it would take no more than 8-10 weeks to win the campaign against the Soviet Union [424].

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On December 6, 1940, Jodl ordered Warlimont's department to work out requirements for a campaign against Russia on the basis of preliminary plans approved by Hitler. Six days later, a draft of the future Directive No. 21, compiled by von Lossberg, already familiar to us, was ready. On December 16, the draft directive, finalized taking into account the comments received, was reported to Hitler, who made minor amendments to it regarding the tasks of Army Groups Center and North. The Fuehrer decided first of all to capture Leningrad from Kronstadt and destroy the Red Army forces in the Baltic. Only then did the attack on Moscow become the main goal. However, in the event that the Russian resistance had collapsed even earlier, the GA "Center" was allowed to move simultaneously in both directions: to Moscow and to Leningrad. In a conversation with Jodl, Hitler expressed another good reason why he urgently needed to put an end to the USSR. He was convinced that "in 1941 we must solve all continental problems in Europe, since after 1942 the United States will be able to enter the war" [425].

On December 18, 1940, after making the last changes, Directive No. 21 was signed by Hitler, and the plan outlined in it received its final name - "Barbarossa". Its full text is given in Appendix I. This directive clearly shows that the German leadership was once again preparing to win in the shortest possible time. The Luftwaffe was not even tasked with strategic bombing of Soviet targets. Army co-

the command and chief of German aviation Goering did not consider them necessary. They did not doubt the next future success.

Only Admiral Raeder was not so optimistic. He twice tried to convince Hitler, emphasizing the danger of starting a new big war without finishing with England. He argued that in the first place it is necessary to concentrate all the resources of the country against England. This country has gradually recovered from recent defeats and quickly gained new strength as a result of extensive support from the United States. She has already achieved real success in the fight against Italy in the Mediterranean. In order to defeat England, [Germany urgently needed to use all its capabilities

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to strengthen the fleet and aviation. Raeder categorically objected to starting a war with the USSR until the final victory over England. But his sober arguments again remained a voice crying in the desert: preparations for an attack on the USSR were in full swing. The admiral only managed to trade Hitler's consent to accelerate the construction of submarines for the naval blockade of England.

However, the Führer was still deeply convinced that he must destroy his last real rival on the European continent even before the decisive battle with the British began. However, the victory over England continued to be his main strategic goal. That is why, according to Hitler's decree of September 28, 1940, the first priority in the distribution of the limited resources of German industry was given to the production of weapons necessary for the siege and subsequent assault of the island state. In addition to submarines, they included torpedoes, mines, light ships, bombers and bombs for them. In second place were the means of protecting the Reich from British aviation, primarily 88-mm anti-aircraft guns and ammunition for them. The manufacture of weapons for the land army was given only third place. The Germans seriously hoped to put an end to the Soviet Union with the forces and means already available [426].

OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS OKH AND FURTHER PLANS OF THE GERMANS

Tasks in accordance with the Barbarossa plan in January 1941 were brought to the attention of army groups, at whose headquarters command and staff exercises were held to work out in detail the upcoming hostilities. Their results and the ideas found there were thoroughly discussed at meetings in the OKH. At one of them, on 31 January, Brauchitsch instructed the commanders of the army groups to base their planning on the fact that the Russians would take the battle west of the line of the Western Dvina and Dnieper rivers. When later one of them

Quite reasonably, Halder asked what such confidence was based on, he honestly admitted: "Everything can happen differently" [427]. The Germans could only hope that

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that the main forces of the Russians would enter the border battle and be destroyed during it, after which the war, it seemed, should have turned into an easy walk for the Wehrmacht. Based on exercises, repeated discussions and meetings, the operations department of the OKH developed a "Directive on the strategic concentration and deployment of troops." This guiding document of January 31, 1941, which was the practical implementation of the Barbarossa plan, was approved by Hitler on February 3.

The preamble of the directive stated that preparations for a blitzkrieg against the USSR were carried out in case of a change in its attitude towards Germany. For a quick and decisive victory over the Red Army, it was necessary to drive armored wedges far into the depths of Soviet territory in order to destroy its main forces and prevent them from retreating. It was assumed that the Russians might try to stop the German offensive by taking up prearranged positions on the new and old frontiers, as well as holding numerous water barriers west of the Western Dvina and the Dnieper. Strong resistance was expected in the Baltic and on the Black Sea coast to protect the naval bases and airfields located there. In case of failure in these battles, the Western Dvina and Dnieper rivers could become the subsequent lines of defense of the Russians. The directive defined tasks for army groups.

Army Group South was to form two main strike groups: one on the Prut River in Romania, and the other in the Lublin-Yaroslav region. These forces were tasked with advancing in converging directions in order to encircle the Russian troops on the territory of Western Ukraine. Particular attention was paid to Kyiv, which was not only the center of the largest Soviet military district, but also an important transport hub. After its capture, the further offensive of the GA "South" was to be coordinated with the actions of the GA "Center".

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In fact, it was just a simple excuse. The development and implementation of the Barbarossa plan went on as usual in accordance with

by the will of the Fuhrer, despite all the efforts of the Soviet leadership to maintain good relations with Germany.

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From the south through Kirovograd to the Dnieper was to advance

12th Army, consisting of German and Romanian divisions. It was planned to subjugate a motorized corps of two tank and one motorized divisions to it. The northern strike force, whose assembly area was Lublin, consisted of the 6th Army and the 1st Panzer Group (TGr). These forces were to carry out the most important and difficult task of GA "South": to break through to Kiev and seize bridgeheads on the eastern bank of the Dnieper, then turn to the southeast and link up with the 12th Army, completing the encirclement of enemy troops. In addition, they were entrusted with the task of covering the northern flank of the army group from the Pripjat swamps. The 6th Army was tasked with following the 1st TG to Kyiv with maximum speed, ready to commit sufficient forces for maneuver to the southeast. The 17th Army, which did not have mobile formations, was located between the strike groups. She had the task of forging the center of the Russians and preventing them from escaping encirclement.

Army Group Center concentrated its main forces on the flanks. The southern grouping consisting of the 4th Army and the 2nd Tr was to advance along the Baranovichi Minsk-Orsha highway. The northern grouping, consisting of the 9th Army and the 3rd TG, advanced from Suvalka to Molodechno and further to Orsha. The goal of their operation was to encircle and completely destroy the Red Army forces located in the Bialystok ledge between the western border and Minsk. In the future, the 4th Army was to advance after the 2nd TGr through Bobruisk and Borisov to Mogilev and further north. The 9th Army, using the successes of the 3rd TGr, went to the Western Dvina in the Polotsk region and upstream.

Army Group North was preparing to strike from East Prussia through Kaunas and Daugavpils in the direction south of Pskov to cut off Soviet troops in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and press them to the Baltic Sea, as well as to seize a bridgehead in the Lake Ilmen area in order to create favorable conditions for further attack on Leningrad. The initial task of the 4th TGr was set: in cooperation with the 16th army, to break through the Soviet border fortifications in the area of the Gumbinen-Kaunas highway and force the Zapadnaya Dvina near Daugavpils and downstream, in order to both

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you can quickly go to the area south of Pskov. In the future, move north or northeast, depending on the situation. The 18th Army was to break through the Soviet defenses at the border, cross the Western Dvina at Jekabpils and destroy the Red Army forces encircled northwest of Riga. In the future, she had to quickly move towards Pskov in order to prevent the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the area southwest of Lake Peipsi and create conditions for capturing Estonia and the islands of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa.

Finland was to coordinate with the OKH. Her troops could advance at their choice to the east or

west of Lake Ladoga, but to coordinate their advance with the crossing of the forces of the GA "North" across the Western Dvina.

Before the German army "Norway" tasks were set:

A) Protect Norway from any attempt by the British to land in it. Pay special attention to the defense of the Kirkenes-Narvik region.

B) Seize the Petsamo area with its nickel mines and apply pressure in the direction of Murmansk to capture this port as soon as the situation at the front allows sufficient forces to be released to carry out this task.

On February 2, Hitler received Field Marshal von Bock, commander of the GA Center, and discussed the future operation with him. Bock had no doubts of victory if the Russians decided to take the fight on the territory adjacent to the border. But he did not understand how to force them to capitulate. Hitler assured his commander that after the loss of Ukraine, Moscow and Leningrad, they would simply have no other choice. But if the Russians want to continue resistance, the German mobile troops will reach the very Urals. The Führer expressed his complete satisfaction with the condition of the troops and the level reached by the war economy. He rejected any possibility of settling the brewing conflict and excitedly exclaimed, "I will fight!" But it was not him who had to fight, but others ...

The next day, another meeting was held with the participation of Hitler, dedicated to the campaign in the Balkans and

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operational planning in the East. Speaking at it, Halder estimated the forces of the Red Army, which would resist the German invasion, at 100 rifle and 25 cavalry divisions, as well as 30 motorized brigades! [428]. The Soviet rifle divisions of that time had tank battalions in their staff, but the Germans considered the quality of their tanks to be low. For the same reason, they believed that although the Soviet tank forces had a noticeable numerical advantage over the Germans, the qualitative superiority still remained with the Germans. They considered the artillery of the Red Army to be numerous, but not very effective, with outdated materiel. Among the top Soviet military commanders, only Marshal Timoshenko was highly rated by the Germans. Despite the lack of reliable information about Soviet military plans, Halder concluded that, judging by the concentration of large forces near the border and the intensive construction of fortifications, especially in the north and south, the Red Army was seriously preparing to hold the Baltic and Ukraine.

Halder also reported on the German forces intended

for the offensive. It was planned to include 72 divisions in the army groups "Center" and "North", of which 50 were infantry, nine motorized and 13 tank. GA "South" was supposed to have 38 divisions, including 30 infantry, three motorized and five tank divisions. The main reserves were located north of the Pripyat swamps. The six panzer divisions then active in the Balkans were to be transferred to the east as soon as the situation there permitted and the position of Turkey became clear. At this point, Hitler intervened and expressed his confidence that Turkey would not lift a finger, so there was no need for special precautions. As for the plans presented by Halder, the Führer expressed his complete satisfaction with them. He believed that the Russians would not cede Leningrad and Ukraine without a fight, but if they did figure out the intentions of the Germans and withdraw

' This is another example of a serious underestimation of the forces of the Red Army by the German leadership. In fact, in September 1940, 143 rifle, 16 tank, 7 motorized and 10 cavalry divisions, as well as 15 tank brigades were deployed in the western military districts of the USSR [429].

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far back, then Leningrad and the Baltic States should have been captured first. This significantly improved the supply situation and allowed flank attacks to penetrate deep into the center of the Russians and prevent them from escaping into the interior of the country.

Halder continued his report with a description of the action plans of the Army of Norway. One and a half of its divisions were to advance on Petsamo, and the other one and a half were planned to be transferred to northern Finland through Sweden. The task of these forces was to cover the north of Finland and isolate the Russian forces in the Murmansk region. The Finns could allocate four corps for operations in the southern part of their country: five divisions were to advance in the direction of Leningrad, three - on Lake Onega and two - on Hanko. At the same time, they needed German support, since in the southern sector they were opposed by 15 Soviet divisions and another one near Murmansk.

After Hitler pointed out that a rapid advance from Romania was vital to the security of the non-oil producing areas, Halder raised the issue of Hungary. He considered it necessary to use at least its territory, even if this country does not want to take an active part in the war. Hitler believed that an agreement could be reached with Hungary. But the time to start negotiations on cooperation both with her and with Finland, Sweden and Slovakia should have come only after Germany's intentions to start a war could no longer be hidden. The German plans could only be revealed to the leadership of Rumania, whose participation in the future campaign was no longer in doubt. Back in January 1941, Hitler hinted to its ruler Antonescu that

war with the USSR is inevitable, and on June 9 or 10, the German ambassador to Romania, Killinger, told him the exact date of the attack [430]. For the rest of the world, the concentration of the Wehrmacht in the east must have been interpreted as a massive ploy before the final preparations for the landing in England.

After discussing other problems, in particular air defense and transport, both road and rail, Halder explained to the assembled troops the procedure for concentrating troops. The first echelon was to begin its advance

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immediately. The turn of the second echelon advanced in the middle of March, and its forces were to be deployed at some distance from the border. In early April, it was already possible to ask Hungary for permission to transit troops. The movement of the third echelon was planned for mid-April, and after it began to keep the concentration secret it became already a difficult matter. The last echelon, from April 25 to May 15, was to advance, consisting of tank and motorized formations. Hitler summed up the meeting with words of encouragement: "After the start of Operation Barbarossa, the whole world will hold its breath!" At that moment, the prospects for the upcoming campaign in the east seemed very bright to him.

After receiving the operational order, the headquarters of the army groups carried out exercises on the maps and brought their tasks to the armies and tank groups subordinate to them. Those, in turn, played command and staff exercises at their level. The successful ideas and solutions found at the same time were used in draft operational orders developed at the headquarters of army groups. These orders were submitted to the OKH for approval. Then came the turn of the headquarters of the corps and divisions. They, in turn, analyzed the preliminary orders sent down to them from above in their own exercises on maps and command and staff exercises. This preparation ended just before the start of the war. On June 18, all German commanders, up to and including the company, received their combat missions and got acquainted with the terrain on which they were to act.

But this happened later, and on February 5, the chief of staff of the GA "South", General Zodenstern, led a command-staff exercise, the main purpose of which was to test that part of the operational plan that fell within his competence. The chiefs of staff of the armies and corps subordinate to the group, together with the heads of their operational departments, took part in the exercises. The exercises revealed a serious problem: Soviet troops in the Pripyat region could impede the movement of the northern part of the German pincers and thereby prevent the deep coverage of the Red Army forces east of the Dnieper. It also turned out that incorrectly chosen troop concentration areas could interfere with their

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maneuver at the start of the campaign. The necessary changes were immediately made to the plans.

The Germans paid special attention to the most important problem of interaction between infantry and mobile troops at the stage of breaking through the Russian defenses. A solution was found: before the start of hostilities, each tank group received one army corps for temporary subordination. The main task of the attached infantry was to break through gaps in the Soviet front, through which it was planned to quickly introduce tank and motorized formations. Thus, complete surprise of their actions was achieved, and the striking force of the mobile forces was preserved for deep breakthroughs. After the panzer groups, having moved far ahead, broke away from their infantry, they returned to the composition of their former armies [431].

On March 18, 1941, Hitler decided that the 6th Army should deal the main blow in the GA South sector. The intention to advance through Moldavia to the northeast with the forces of the 12th Army was abandoned. German and Romanian units, occupying positions along the Prut River, were to pin down the Soviet troops opposing them and pursue them if they retreated. This change was made after Hitler expressed his fear that such a wide water barrier as the Dniester could not be overcome on the move. According to the new plan, the reinforced left wing of the GA "South" was to break through to Kyiv and reach the Dniester line from the rear. The forces concentrated in Moldavia were tasked with preventing the advance of Soviet troops into Romania. But this threat did not seem too serious to the Germans. Brauchitsch believed that the Russians would not attack the Romanians unless they themselves were attacked from their territory. Hitler also brought to the attention of his generals that Hungary would take part in Operation Barbarossa, and that aid to Slovakia would be limited to providing its territory for the concentration of troops and their supplies.

The coup in Yugoslavia, which took place on March 26, forced Hitler to urgently transfer military operations to the Balkans. Large Wehrmacht forces were sent there, including six tank and three motorized divisions. The large size of the new theater forced the Germans after the end

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fight to put the army headquarters at the head of their occupying forces. This role was assigned to the management of the 12th army, which led operations in Greece. Instead, the headquarters of the 11th Army was assigned to lead the troops in Moldova.

On March 30, the commanders of the armies and army groups were called to Hitler. The meeting also discussed the role

11th Army. Hitler ordered that her forces be divided into three separate groups capable of supporting the Romanian troops if necessary. Since the army was assigned a purely defensive role, all mobile vojekas, originally intended for it, were transferred to the 1st Panzer Group. The Germans intended to achieve the encirclement of the Soviet troops in the Ukraine with deep coverage from the north, by breaking through the mobile forces to the Dnieper in the Kyiv region and to the south of it. Their further task was a sharp turn to the southeast in order to develop an offensive along the Dnieper channel to its very mouth. If successful, all Russian forces in the western part of Ukraine fell into a trap.

As a result of the change in plans, appropriate amendments were made to Directive No. 21, including those relating to the GA "South":

"<...> is concentrating its main strike forces in the region of Lublin and to the south of it for an offensive in the general direction of Kyiv. From there, reinforced tank units will make a breakthrough deep into enemy territory, covering Russian troops along the lower reaches of the Dnieper" [432].

The combined German-Romanian troops in the south were to ensure the security of Romania, pin down the opposing enemy forces and, with the development of the situation, go into pursuit in order to prevent an organized withdrawal of the Russians to the Dnieper.

Appropriate amendments were made to the Directive on the Strategic Concentration and Deployment of Troops. From now on, it was not planned to have strike groups on both flanks in GA "South". Instead, she was instructed to gather a powerful fist on her left wing, where the mobile troops were to lead the rush to Kyiv, and after that turn to the southeast to surround and

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destroy, or at least cut off the Soviet troops stationed in the western part of Ukraine. In accordance with this plan, the tasks of the 1st Panzer Group and the armies were changed:

- The 1st TE was supposed to break through Berdichev and Zhitomir to the Dnieper in the Kyiv region, and then turn to the southeast to cut off the retreat paths of Soviet troops in Ukraine;
- The 6th Army was instructed to cover the northern flank of the GA "South" from any threat from the Pripyat marshes and move directly behind the 1st TG to Zhitomir itself. After receiving the order at the right moment, it was necessary to send our strike force in a southeast direction along the western bank of the Dnieper and, together with

1st TGr destroy Soviet troops west of this river.

The tasks of the 17th and 11th armies were changed in a similar way.

The OKH was well aware of the complexity of this operation, built on the deep coverage of the enemy from only one side. Her plan bore undoubted traces of the influence of Manstein's "sickle strike", which brought the Germans such a brilliant victory in May 1940. But the scale of the planned operation could not be compared with the events in France, and the results of the operation largely depended on the ability of the Soviet command to correctly and timely respond to the development of the situation.

In the Far North, Hitler wished to advance to Murmansk and, if the opportunity arose, capture this important ice-free port. This would have prevented Murmansk from being used as a base for advances into Northern Finland and Norway, and would have prevented the British from landing on the Kola Peninsula. At the same time, advancing on Kandalaksha, the Germans wanted to cut the supply lines of Murmansk. Both strikes from northern Finland were delivered in addition to three more from its southern part: across the Karelian Isthmus, east of Ladoga and on Khanko. Initially, it was supposed to subordinate the German troops in Northern Finland to the Finnish commander-in-chief, Field Marshal Mannerheim. But when he abandoned it, the management of operations in North and Central

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Finland was assigned to the command of the German army "Norway". The area of responsibility of the Finns remained Southern Finland.

In early April, immediately after the German intervention in the Balkans, the start of the campaign against the USSR was delayed by four to six weeks. The battles there ended at the very end of April with the evacuation of the defeated English troops from Greece. But already in the second half of this month, most of the German divisions involved there were withdrawn for rest and replenishment, so that they could properly prepare for the war with the Soviet Union. The exception was two panzer divisions, the 2nd and 5th, which, together with two mountain divisions and the motorized SS regiment "Adolf Hitler", continued their advance to the very south of Greece. Then they had to take a long time to put themselves in order. Finally, on April 30, Hitler set a new date for the invasion of the USSR - June 22, 1941 [433].

During the entire period of planning and preparation for Operation Barbarossa, Hitler and his military leadership sincerely believed in the possibility of defeating the Soviet Union within 3-5 months. The victory over the USSR gave Germany a real opportunity to solve all serious problems once and for all.

problems caused by the British blockade. The Nazis were not at all worried about the fate of tens of millions of people thrown into the furnace of war, especially since it was about the victory of Germany in the war for world domination. It was to him, in fact, that they aspired in the end. The capture of Soviet resources, which Germany badly needed to wage a long war, was to be only the next stage on this long road.

In September 1941, Hitler expressed his views on the matter in no uncertain terms:

“The struggle for world domination will be solved for Europe by the mastery of Russian territory: this will turn Europe into the most blockade-resistant place in the world” [434].

He had no doubts about his success...

Chapter 6

PLANS OF THE USSR IN CONNECTION WITH THE GROWING THREAT OF WAR

PLANS FOR THE STRATEGIC AND MOBILIZATION DEPLOYMENT OF THE RKKA

With the defeat of Poland and then France, the geopolitical situation in Europe changed radically. The Soviet troops came into direct contact with the German ones. With the entry of Soviet troops into the territory of the Baltic States, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, the previous plans for preparing the country and the armed forces for a possible war no longer corresponded to the new realities. The need for their revision was due not only to changes in the international situation, but also to ongoing changes in the combat composition of the Red Army, in operational-strategic methods of conducting combat operations with the massive use of new types of weapons.

The most important document determining the structure and main combat composition of the country's armed forces, the system of measures and actions to transfer them from a peaceful position to a military one was at that time a strategic deployment plan, which included the creation of groupings of troops (forces) in selected directions or military theaters. actions (operational deployment) in accordance with the objectives of the war and the concept of upcoming actions, strategic regrouping of troops (forces) from the interior of the country to theaters of military operations (if necessary, and between them), as well as the deployment of priority strategic reserves.

Plans for the strategic and operational deployment of the country's armed forces are based on a certain concept that ensures the security of the state. That is, on what is now commonly called military doctrine, which

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determines the political leadership of the country. This is the foundation, the basis for preparing the country for the coming war. The specific content of the measures envisaged by these plans can be found in. direct dependence on the state of the country's economy, which determines the level of technical equipment of the armed forces, as well as on the possibilities for their mobilization deployment, since for economic reasons it is impossible to maintain the armed forces in peacetime according to the wartime staff. Therefore, strategic deployment plans depended on the composition and state of mobilization resources, which depended on the state of the country's economy. In turn, the plan for the strategic deployment of the armed forces has a reverse effect on the country's economy, the development of which is carried out, among other things, taking into account the needs of the armed forces and the war as a whole in mobilization resources. In other words, both plans are interconnected and interdependent. This is not always taken into account in their writings by some historians and researchers.

When planning preparations for war, it was necessary to determine, first of all, the probable adversaries, their military capabilities, and the degree and sequence of threats. In 1940, Germany and its allies began to be considered the main probable adversary. It was more difficult to determine the strategic directions in which the main forces of the Red Army and the fleet should be concentrated. This is not such an easy task. On this occasion, there were different points of view in the political and military leadership of the country. Moreover, with the advancement of the new border to the west, the old problem aggravated - the vast swampy region of Polesye separated the territories of Belarus and Ukraine, making it difficult to maneuver forces and means along the front.

At the beginning of August 1940, a new operational plan was reported to People's Commissar Timoshenko. Its main executor was the deputy chief of the operational department of the General Staff, the future famous marshal, and at that time Major General A.M. Vasilevsky, who worked under the direct supervision of the then Chief of the General Staff B.M. Shaposhnikova. Shaposhnikov made most of the necessary operational calculations for him personally. The general plan, like his previous plan, was based on the assumption that the Germans would strike the main blow north of the Pripyat marshes.

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But this fundamentally contradicted the views of Stalin, who, contrary to the General Staff, believed that the Germans would definitely want to seize the grain, coal and ore of Ukraine, which they needed to wage a long war. Therefore, it was this strategic direction that needed to be strengthened.

In connection with the shortcomings in the work of the General Staff, noted in

on the act of surrender and acceptance of the People's Commissariat of Defense, on August 19, the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Shaposhnikov, was replaced by General of the Army K.A. Meretskov. Under his leadership, the same Vasilevsky, on the basis of the latest instructions, radically revised this plan, which was called "Considerations on the Foundations of the Strategic Deployment of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union in the West and in the East for 1940 and 1941." On September 18, it was supplemented with "Considerations for the Deployment of the Armed Forces of the Red Army in the event of a war with Finland", which was a plan for the defeat of this country, if necessary. But, since Finland's entry into the war ALONE was considered unlikely, planning was carried out with the expectation of fighting Germany first of all. To this end, it was envisaged to deploy troops of three fronts in the Western theater of operations: the North-Western (NWF), Western (ZapF) and South-Western (SWF). In the event of a war with Japan, it was planned to create the Trans-Baikal and Far Eastern fronts.

In the new plan, unlike all the previous ones, all the main opponents of the USSR were finally precisely defined and the correct conclusion was drawn about the need to be ready for a war on two fronts: in the west and in the east. [The General Staff, despite the agreements concluded with Germany, correctly identified the main enemy and the possible composition of the coalition hostile to the USSR in Europe. The position of Germany's possible allies, Finland and Romania, was also clear to him, who hoped, in alliance with Hitler, to regain the territories lost in 1940.

The plan provided for two options for strategic deployment in the West. According to the first of them, the main forces of the Red Army were to operate south of the Pripyat marshes, with the main task of defeating the Lublin-Sandomierz group of Germans and cutting off Germany from the Balkans and, above all, from Romanian oil (the so-called "southern" option, see Diagram 9) . It is this va

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variant was considered the main one. The note included a calculation for the creation of a grouping of troops of the South-Western Front. It stated that, taking into account the existing throughput capacity of the railways of the south-west, the concentration of the main forces of the front armies (68 rifle divisions) could be completed only on the 30th day from the start of mobilization, only after which it would be possible to switch to a general offensive to solve the tasks set above. Therefore, the developers honestly pointed out that "Such a late deployment of the armies of the Southwestern Front is the only, but a serious drawback of this deployment option." .

According to the second option, decisive battles were planned north of Brest-Litovsk, where the task of the Soviet troops was to defeat the main forces of the German army within East Prussia and capture the latter (the so-called "northern" option, see diagram 10). Moreover, in both cases, it was assumed that the hostilities would begin with active defense with the task of covering the mobilization and concentration of the main forces of the Soviet troops. The note stated that "The final decision on deployment will depend on the political situation that will develop by the beginning of the war, but in peacetime I consider it necessary to have both options developed."

Therefore, both options for the deployment of the main forces of the Red Army (either to the south or to the north of Brest) were considered as equivalent. In this, some researchers saw a more flexible than before approach to assessing the possible actions of Germany. The possibility of making a final decision on this very important issue was mentioned in a note by the Chief of the General Staff B.M. Shaposhnikov on March 24, 1938:

"Our reconnaissance of the concentration movements carried out by our probable enemies will determine Where their main forces will be deployed, and therefore, starting from the 10th day of mobilization, we can also change the options for our deployment of the main forces, taking it to the north or south of Polissya" [435]. |

In other words, all hopes were pinned on the efficiency and promptness of our reconnaissance. According to the authors

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book, the decision to develop both options for the deployment of the main forces can be considered justified only from the point of view of their preliminary study. In practice, given the underdeveloped transport system of the country, including the insufficient capacity of the railways, it was necessary to decide in advance, even in peacetime, where to concentrate the main efforts - north or south of Polesie. In connection with the transfer of the border to the west, the swampy region of the Pripyat River ended up entirely on the territory of the USSR, further dividing the theater of military operations

into two distinct strategic directions. To continue to sit on two chairs at once, with a far more formidable adversary in front of us than Poland, was dangerous to say the least.

The new plan was sent for preliminary review to Stalin, and on October 5 it was reported to him and Molotov. At the direction of the leader, the composition of the troops of the future Southwestern Front was further strengthened. The number of divisions was increased: rifle divisions from 75 to 80, motorized rifle divisions from 4 to 5, tank divisions from 9 to 11. At the same time, the number of tank brigades there increased from 5 to 20, and the number of air regiments increased from 88 to 140 [436]. This plan was approved by Stalin on October 14 in a modified form. But work on it continued at full speed. At the same time, in accordance with the wishes of the top management, the emphasis was increasingly shifted to the southern option. On November 17, Timoshenko and Meretskov signed the report "Main conclusions from the instructions of the Politburo and Council of People's Commissars of the USSR on October 5, 1940, when considering plans for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the USSR for 1941." According to it, the forces of the Red Army in the west were planned to be increased to 182.5 settlement divisions and 159 air regiments, of which 113 divisions and 140 air regiments were intended for the Southwestern Front. As a result, 74.5% of all formations and 88% of air units of the Western theater of operations were concentrated in the southwestern strategic direction, taking into account the troops of the RGC. The final completion of the plan at the General Staff was scheduled for December 15, and in the districts the relevant documentation was to be prepared by 1 May 1941 [437]. However, all these deadlines were thwarted, and mainly because of the continuing turmoil in the opinions of the leadership at the very top of the army and the state.

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In order to verify and refine the new strategic deployment plan and the operational plans of the fronts, at the end of December 1940 - the beginning of January 1941, operational-strategic gatherings of the highest command of the Red Army were held in Moscow. The meetings turned out to be extremely representative, over 270 people took part in them, including the leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff, heads of central departments, commanders, members of military councils and chiefs of staff of military districts and armies, heads of military academies, general inspectors of military branches, as well as commanders of some corps and divisions. After the end of the meeting, which constituted the first part of the gathering, and the celebration of the new [194] year, large-scale operational-strategic games were held under the personal leadership of People's Commissar Timoshenko. The main purpose of the games was to work out options for the recently adopted operational plan.

The first of them took place on January 2-6, 1941, only a month later than the German games, at which the preliminary plan of aggression against the Soviet Union was tested. But the game in Moscow had a completely different focus. "Fighting" on it was played out in the north-western direction in

in line with the second version of the recently approved operational plan. The forces of the "Eastern" were led by the commander of the ZapOVO troops, Colonel-General of the tank troops D.G. Pavlov, and the "Western" who opposed them - the commander of the KOVO troops, General of the Army G.K. Zhukov. 92 rifle (infantry), 4 cavalry, 6 motorized and 12 tank divisions, 26 tank and mechanized brigades, more than 17.8 thousand guns and more than 12.3 thousand tanks, about nine thousand aircraft.

At the second game, held from January 8 to 11, the main version of the operational plan was worked out. In terms of the composition of the troops involved and the territory on which the troops "operated", this game was much superior to the first. 181 rifle, 10 cavalry, 7 motorized and 15 tank divisions, 22 tank and mechanized brigades, about 29 thousand guns and mortars, over 12.1 thousand tanks, more than 10, 2 thousand aircraft. This time G.K. Zhukov co.

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commanded the troops of the "Eastern", and the "Western" was headed by D.G. Pavlov and the commander of the PribOVO troops, Lieutenant General F.I. Kuznetsov [438].

According to the initial data, the attack in the summer of 1941 in both cases was carried out by the "Western", but actions to repel "aggression" at the games were not practiced at all. Moreover, the initial period of the war was completely ignored. The conditional scenario of the conflict assumed that during the first week or two of hostilities, the "Western" together with their allies, without completing the deployment, carried out an attack on the "Eastern" and managed to advance 50-120 km deep into their territory. Then the "Eastern" launched powerful counterattacks and drove the troops of the "Western" back to their original position or even transferred the fighting to enemy land. To do this, a significant overall quantitative superiority of the "Eastern" over the "Western" was created: in tanks in the first game - two and a half times, in the second - three times, in aircraft, respectively, 1.7 and 1.3 times.

Recognizing defense as a natural method of conducting military operations, the command of the Red Army paid unduly little attention to the development of the theory and practice of conducting defensive operations on a strategic scale. Taking into account the balance of forces and means of Germany and the USSR, it was supposed to repulse the first blow of the enemy and eliminate the successes achieved by him in any case, as if by magic. And only from that moment, in fact, did the rally of "combat actions" begin in both games, dedicated already to the development of offensive operations of the "Eastern". |

Thus, the games, contrary to popular belief, had nothing to do with the real problems that

the Red Army and its command had to decide in the initial period of the Great Patriotic War. The main flaw in the plans being developed was that they all proceeded from the possibility of a threatened period. The envisioned by them putting into effect plans to cover the state border in order to ensure the deployment of the main forces was planned on the day the mobilization was announced or with the outbreak of war. Unfortunately, the well-known expression that "generals are always preparing for the last war" has been confirmed. And not only generals, as it turned out, but also politicians.

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The results achieved during the games had far-reaching consequences. First of all, it turned out that the attack on East Prussia, with its difficult terrain, and most importantly, because of the powerful lines of fortifications erected there, saturated with a large number of stationary firing structures, promised few prospects. This opinion was reinforced by the recent sad experience of breaking through the "Manner-game line". In contrast, the chances of success in the south were considered much higher. As a result, it was concluded that delivering the main blow in the southwestern strategic direction while simultaneously pinning down the enemy through private operations in the northwest and in Romania would solve several key strategic tasks and ensure further successful actions of the Red Army.

Summing up the results of the meeting of the top leadership of the Red Army, People's Commissar Timoshenko on December 31, 1940 noted that new topical and problematic issues of military art were discussed during it. In an atmosphere of "bold individual and collective creative activity, which is the basis of military science and military art, <...> we begin to create new foundations, new prerequisites for the further growth of our Red Army." The People's Commissar could not do without praises to the leader: "we" <...> are deepening and expanding that perestroika in the Red Army, which

carried out on the directive of Comrade Stalin six months ago. <...> We began to truly carry out the instructions of Comrade Stalin on raising the military-ideological level of our command cadres and laid the foundation for the creation of our own military ideology "(emphasis added. - / Auth.).

Note that autocracy is generally incompatible with genuine science. How can one not recall Jomini, who substantiated and applied "the principle of spiritual independence of a military theorist and historian, the ability to boldly express his recommendations to the monarch. The true scientist is free from anger and attachment. "I don't know any other more independent researcher than Jomini," wrote one of the general's followers. According to Svechin, Jomini was an "internationalist" in the sense that military theory cannot be developed within the narrow confines of one nation.

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Timoshenko tried to belittle the significance of the Wehrmacht's victories over the Anglo-French troops, saying: "In terms of strategic creativity, the experience of the war in Europe, perhaps, does not give anything new." The people's commissar did not substantiate this thoughtful conclusion, making it clear to those present that only Comrade Stalin could deal with questions of strategy. However, further Timoshenko could not fail to note that "major changes are taking place in the field of operational art, in the field of front-line and army operations. <...> the strength and success of the modern offensive - in a high pace and continuity of the offensive, "which are ensured by" the massive use of motorized and air units used for delivering the first strike and for the continuous development of the strike in depth. At the same time, "<...> the role of the infantry during the attack has changed. From a strike weapon, it turned into the base of an armored strike wedge, which, like the tip of tank divisions, cut into the depths of enemy territory.

The People's Commissar considered it necessary to emphasize: there was a thorough preparation of the theaters of the upcoming military operations and operations: the development of roads and railroads; creation of an airfield network both on one's own territory and its undercover support on enemy territory; mass planting of agents in the zone of upcoming operations (creating panic among the population, quick information about groupings of troops or important movements); preparation of advanced logistics bases; accumulation of restorative means of communication". And he concluded: "When studying army and front-line operations, we need to constantly take into account the real material base, with a forecast for the future, in connection with the growth of the economy of our country" [439].

Timoshenko also paid attention to defense. He noted

that "A number of breakthroughs successfully carried out in the West in the war of 1939-1940. gave rise to some researchers the idea of a crisis of modern defense. Such a conclusion is not substantiated. It cannot be made from the fact that neither on the Polish nor on the French fronts the Germans met with due rebuff.

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ra. <...> The experience of the war shows that modern defense cannot be limited to one tactical zone of resistance, that against new deep methods of breakthrough, a second and, perhaps, a third operational defense echelon is needed, consisting of operational reserves, special anti-tank units and others means based on defensive anti-tank areas or lines prepared in the rear. Under these conditions, the defense regains its stability and retains all the rights of citizenship in the future <...>" [440]. However the question is; under what conditions the defense has the right to exist and on a strategic scale, has not been raised. And no wonder: although Stalin himself was not present at this meeting, he personally edited the final word of the People's Commissar of Defense. In addition to a few remarks, he added the phrases: "Defense is started in order to prepare an offensive" and "Defense is especially beneficial only if it is conceived as a means for organizing an offensive, and not as an end in itself" [441].

Unfortunately, those who could truly appreciate the new ideas and methods of warfare used by the Germans in Poland and the West, and boldly express their opinion, were not at the meeting. Almost none of them remained in all the armed forces. By this time, dissent had largely been rooted out. It's a pity. For example, the prominent military theorist G.S. Isserson!, who also had extensive experience in command and staff work, could express his thoughts on the content of the initial period of the war. In 1940, based on a deep analysis of the experience of the outbreak of the Second

Isserson Georgy Samoilovich (1898-1976). He graduated from the school of ensigns. In the Red Army since 1918, Member of the Civil War, military commissar of the regiment, chief of staff of the rifle corps, by the beginning of the 30s - head of the operations department of the headquarters of the LVO. In 1930-1933. adjunct, lecturer, then head of the operations department of the Military Academy named after V.I. Frunze (1931). In 1932 he published the work "The Evolution of Operational Art". Since 1933, the commander of the 4th bd BVO. Since 1936, head of the department of operational art of the Military Academy of the General Staff, professor. In 1939-1940. Chief of Staff of the 7th Army, Divisional Commander In 1940-1941. at the disposal of the NPO of the USSR. Arrested on 06/07/1941, sentenced by the Military Tribunal of the PriVO on 01/21/1942 to 10 years in labor camp and 5 years of disqualification. Rehabilitated on 06/01/55, released from exile on 07/14/1955.

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World War II wrote a short but very interesting book "New Forms of Struggle (Experience in the Study of Modern Wars)", where he made instructive conclusions about the methods of unleashing modern wars and the forms of conducting initial operations. In it, a year before the Great Patriotic War, he prophetically stated:

"War is not declared at all. It simply begins with pre-deployed military forces. Mobilization and concentration do not belong to the period after the onset of the state of war, as was the case in 1914, but imperceptibly, gradually carried out long before that. Of course, it is impossible to completely hide this. In one dimension or another, concentration becomes known.

For example, a huge armed force does not turn out to be deployed. After that, it remains only to give a signal, and the war immediately breaks out in its full scale" [442].

Unfortunately, none of those in power in the USSR wanted to listen to Isserson's opinion. Although his ideas were noted and "marked": Isserson was arrested two weeks before the start of the war. They didn't want to shoot him (for what? - after all, his forecast was completely confirmed), but they sentenced him to 10 years in labor camp and 5 years of disqualification.

As subsequent events showed, our military leaders failed to really understand the essence of the German blitzkrieg strategy, which ensured the rapid victories of the Wehrmacht in Poland and France. Tymoshenko did not notice the "blitz krieg" elephant... And the very topical question of what can and should be countered to the massive use of enemy tank and mechanized formations, continuously supported by air strikes, did not receive due attention. Despite some breakthroughs in the theory of military affairs, the experience of the First World War and [civil wars] continued to weigh on the bulk of the commanders, especially those who came from the lower classes. The changed nature of the initial period of the war was never taken into account when planning the first operations and training command personnel, staffs and troops.

However, the impressive successes of the Germans in the battles that unfolded in the West in May 1940 forced the command of the Red Army to reconsider its critical attitude.

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decision to create large tank and mechanized formations. Without waiting for the end of the fighting in France, it was decided to re-form the tank corps, hastily disbanded immediately after the Polish campaign just six months ago, but in a different, more powerful formation.

stav.

According to the results of the games in the top management echelon of the Red

The army underwent significant personnel changes. Stalin was favorably impressed by Zhukov's report at the meeting (he did not know that the report was written by Colonel Bagramyan), and that he acted noticeably better than his opponents. And on January 14, 1941, G.K. Zhukov. He occupied this most responsible post, despite his complete lack of an appropriate education and an open dislike for staff work. What was the reason for such an appointment is known only to Stalin. Zhukov personally reported to the leader about the defeat of the 6th Japanese army on the river. Khalkhin-Gol'. He liked Zhukov's activities as commander of the troops of the Kyiv Military District and how he expelled the Romanians from Bessarabia. Stalin was impressed by bold, energetic people with a strong will and, of course, personally devoted to him. He trusted the cavalrymen, natives of the 1st Cavalry Army - Timoshenko, Budyonny, Shchadenko and others. When the ranks of generals were established in the Red Army on May 7, 1940, Zhukov was among the first to be awarded the rank of general of the army. Appointed instead of Zhukov to the vacant post of commander of the KVO M.P. Kirponos on February 22, 1941 received the rank of colonel general. By the same decree, the next military ranks were awarded to Zhukov's recent opponents in games: Pavlov was

' Our troops launched a decisive offensive on August 20. Zhukov very timely - on the day the pact was signed on August 23 - reported on the encirclement of the entire Japanese group. August 29, 1939 G.K. Zhukov at

received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. And on August 31, the last pockets of Japanese resistance were eliminated.

* According to Konev, in October 1941 Stalin complained to him that the cavalry had let him down.

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promoted to general of the army, and Kuznetsov became general-pol Kovnik.

Without wasting time on the buildup, Zhukov energetically set to work previously unfamiliar to him. On his instructions, the operational department of the General Staff under the leadership of Lieutenant General G.K. Malandina began to refine the recently adopted "Considerations ..." in accordance with the results of the operational-strategic games that had just been held. On March 11, this work was completed. The preamble to the new plan stated:

"In connection with the major organizational measures being carried out in the Red Army in 1941, I am reporting for your consideration an updated strategic deployment plan.

Armed Forces of the Soviet Union in the West and in the East" (highlighted by us. - Auth.) [443].

Under the note, the signatures of People's Commissar of Defense Marshal S. Timoshenko and Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army General of the Army G. Zhukov were sealed. And it was signed only by Major General Vasilevsky, who personally executed the note. It makes sense to take a closer look at this document, drawn up just three months before the start of the war. It emphasized:

"The current political situation in Europe forces us to pay exclusive attention to the defense of our western borders.

<...> Germany currently has 225 infantry, 20 tank and 15 motorized divisions deployed, and in total up to 260 divisions, 20,000 field guns of all calibers, 10,000 tanks and up to 15,000 aircraft, of which 9,000-9,500 are combat " [444].

In fact, in March, Germany had 191 divisions and 4,296 combat aircraft, including transports. On | April, she had 11,627 field guns, not counting the captured ones, which were relatively few then, and two months later, on | June - only 5162 tanks [445]. As we can see, all the figures in assessing the forces of Germany were clearly overestimated.

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It would seem that this is not bad: on the threshold of war, it is better to err on the big side in order to exclude the possibility of underestimating the degree of threat and, accordingly, adjust your plans accordingly. But such a significant mistake in assessing the enemy later played a cruel joke on the analysts of the General Staff and led them to incorrect conclusions about the readiness of the Wehrmacht for an attack.

According to the plan, the center of gravity of Soviet efforts in a future war was finally shifted south of the Pripyat marshes. The same was expected from a potential adversary:

A.M. Vasilevsky

"Germany, most likely, will deploy its main forces in the southeast - from Sedlec to Hungary, in order to seize Ukraine with a blow to Berdichev, Kiev.

This strike, apparently, will be accompanied by an auxiliary strike in the north - from East Prussia to Dvinsk and Riga, or concentric attacks from Suwalki and Brest to Volkovysk, Baranovichi.

At the same time, it was not excluded:

"<...> that the Germans will concentrate their main forces in East Prussia and in the Warsaw direction in order to deliver and develop the main blow through the Lithuanian SSR in the direction of Riga or Kovno, Dvinsk.

At the same time, it is necessary to expect auxiliary concentric attacks from Lomzha and Brest with their subsequent development in the direction of Baranovichi, Minsk.

At the same time, it was completely unreasonably assumed that:

"The approximate date for the deployment of the German armies on our western borders is the 10-15th day from the beginning of the concentration" [446].

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Approximately the same period was allotted for this to the Soviet troops. It was expected that Romania would need 15-20 days to deploy troops, and Finland even more - 20-25.

The first battles of a future war were presented to the Soviet leadership as a clash of advanced units, as happened at the beginning of the First World War. Before the start of the battle between the main forces, several days should have passed, during which the USSR hoped to have time to mobilize and deploy its armed forces. A vivid example of the May offensive in the West in 1940, when the Germans invested practically all available forces in the first strike and, thanks to this, quickly achieved a decisive success, unfortunately, did not become a lesson for the Red Army command.

The General Staff assumed the following grouping of enemy forces in the first deployment option:

- north of the lower reaches of the river. Western Bug to the Baltic Sea - 30-40 infantry, 3-5 tank divisions, 2-4 motorized divisions, up to 3570 guns and up to 2000 tanks;
- to the south of Western Bug to the border with Hungary - up to

110 infantry, 14 armored, 10 motorized divisions up to 11,500 guns, 7,500 tanks and most of the aviation, plus Hungarian and Romanian troops.

In the second version of Germany's actions, it was expected that the Germans would allocate up to 130 divisions for operations in the north, most of their artillery, tanks and aircraft, leaving 30-40 infantry divisions for operations in the south, part of tanks and aircraft. At the same time, in both cases, the western direction was considered secondary, and the strike in the direction of Minsk was considered as an auxiliary one. The possible composition of enemy groupings that could be deployed on the borders of the USSR in March 1941 (taking into account the forces of the satellites) is shown in Table 6.1.

The note specifically stipulated that 200 German divisions could be sent against the USSR only if the war with England ended. But the most important thing is that the plan did not clearly define which of the two variant of the enemy's actions was the most probable, although they differed in the most radical way (in terms of the distribution of forces).

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COMPOSITION OF THE ENEMY
FORCES ON THE BORDERS OF THE USSR IN
MARCH 1941 = SOVIET ASSESSMENT)

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In the West

on
[Germany _[165| 20 | 15| | [Finland [18| | 200 [15500 | 10000 | 10000_
| || [10| 6 | 50 [Romania |301 | |3| | 33 [20 | 40 |
60_ [Hungary _[20| | [Total [233| 20| 15| 32| 272[20050 |
10810 | 11600_ | |2| 21 || 850 | 350 | 50_

G t East

6 [850 | 1200 | 300_

imo

[All 160] | |1133| 775 | 850 | 1200 | 300 | REN JTOEICHA

Source: [247].

Notes:

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When calculating the number of equivalent divisions, one brigade was equated to half a division;

n/a — no data.

guns

field
Aircraft

from friend. And the main variant of the strategic deployment of the main forces of the Red Army in the west also depended on this. For such an assessment of the enemy, a student of the Academy of the General Staff would not have been given more than a three. It is impossible to score a two: after all, three possible strategic directions for the enemy's offensive to the depth of the first operations have been discovered. At the same time, judging by the distribution of forces on them given in the document, the main attack of the enemy was expected in the zone of the Southwestern Front. But let's not accuse Vasilevsky and the command of the Red Army of illiteracy - this issue has already been resolved by the "highest authority". And the General Staff remained in accordance with this

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a decision only to distribute forces between the West, the East and the Finnish front.

In general, the document makes a strange impression: there are too many ambiguities in assessing the possible operational plans of the enemy in the west. The nearest and subsequent dachas of the enemy troops in the directions are visible, but what are the further ones? The plan does not at all attempt to determine for what purpose [Germany can deploy such a large grouping of ground forces on its eastern border. From the above assessment of the enemy, it turned out that Hitler simply wants to take away from Stalin what he ceded to him under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact - nothing more. It's like a police operation to punish a disobedient ally. And for this, such large forces listed in the second section of the plan can be deployed? Maybe the developers were afraid that they would be accused of defeatist attitudes? No, most likely, they a priori believed that the first blows of the enemy would be repelled in any case.

The basis of the decision to launch an operation in the offensive is the choice of the direction of the main attack, while in the defense, the direction (area) of concentrating the main efforts. It's impossible to be strong

nym everywhere. It is important to be strong in the right place at the right time. With the length of the front line about 1,500 kilometers, it is especially important to make the right choice of the direction (area) of concentrating the main efforts. A mistake in the distribution of forces in the first strategic operations led to grave consequences. Since it was assumed that Germany could act as the aggressor, it was necessary to determine the most likely direction of the main attack of the Wehrmacht and, in accordance with this, oppose it with forces sufficient to repel the attack. It is impossible to defend everything and everything - there is always not enough strength for this. There is a popular expression - "he who defends everything, defends nothing." Especially if the armed forces are kept in peacetime states.

When developing the deployment plan, it was assumed that the enemy would deliver the main blow in the southwestern strategic direction. And here the main forces of the Red Army were concentrated. We focused not so much on repelling enemy attacks, but on

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carrying out a subsequent offensive operation with the aim of defeating its main grouping and cutting off [Germany from its allies and, above all, from Romanian oil. A clash between the two largest groupings of troops of the parties could inevitably lead to protracted battles with an unclear outcome.

The direction of the main attack of the enemy is determined by a deep analysis of data on his intentions and capabilities, combat composition, grouping of forces and means, combat capability, strengths and weaknesses, and methods of combat operations. At the same time, when assessing the intentions of a potential adversary, it was necessary to take into account the possibility of disinformation on his part. At that time, the Soviet command did not have reliable and, moreover, specific information about the enemy. Intelligence agencies were responsible for this important area of work. Unfortunately, they weren't up to the mark. And no wonder, because during the years of repression, Soviet military intelligence suffered very sensitive losses. Its central apparatus was almost completely destroyed. It is enough to look at the list of its pre-war leaders, who replaced each other with kaleidoscopic speed: I. K. Berzin, S.P. Uritsky, A.M. Nikonov, S.G. Gendin, A.G. Orlov, I.I. Proskurov. All of them, without exception, were shot.

What this personnel carousel led to can be found in the report of the head of the Intelligence Directorate I.I. Proskurov to the People's Commissar of Defense and the Commission of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of May 25, 1940:

"The last two years have been a period of purge of intelligence departments and intelligence agencies. <...> Over the years, the NKVD arrested more than 200 people, replaced the entire leadership, up to and including the heads of departments. During my time

365 people were expelled from command only from the central apparatus and subordinate units for various political reasons and business considerations. 326 people were accepted again, the vast majority of them without reconnaissance training" [448].

What results could be achieved in their activities by people who came to work in military intelligence without special intelligence training? The answer to this, according to

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society, the rhetorical question is given by the "Act on the reception of the People's Commissariat of Defense of the Union of the USSR comrade. Timoshenko S.K. ottov. Voroshi Lova K.E. ", compiled in May 1940:

"The organization of intelligence is one of the weakest areas in the work of the People's Commissariat of Defense. There is no organizational reconnaissance and no systematic receipt of data on foreign armies.

The work of the Intelligence Directorate is not connected with the work of the General Staff. The People's Commissariat of Defense does not have, in the person of the Intelligence Directorate, a body that provides the Red Army with data on the organization, condition, armament, and preparations for the deployment of foreign armies. By the time of admission, the People's Commissariat of Defense does not have such intelligence data. The theaters of military operations and their preparation have not been studied" [449].

Added to this was Stalin's undisguised disdain for military intelligence data. This can be seen in the number of personal reports to the leader by the leaders of the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army. For 11 and a half years of work, the former head of the department, Berzin, got to see him 14 times. Of these, three times - in July and September 1937, immediately after he returned from Spain. Uritsky, who replaced him for a period of two years and two months, visited Stalin 13 times, or every two months. Stalin gave him unusual attention, because his successors - Nikonov, Gendin and Orlov - never received him. On the other hand, during the 15 months of his tenure as head of the Intelligence Directorate, the leader received his mover from aviation Proskurov as many as 10 times. But who took this post from July 11, 1940, F.I. Golikov visited Stalin only four times that year: on October 11, November 20, 22 and 25, spending a total of 3 hours and 20 minutes with him. From the beginning of 1941 until the war itself, he came to him only once, on April 11, and even then only for half an hour [450].

It is noteworthy that the Intelligence Agency, with

On July 26, 1940, formally being one of the divisions of the General Staff, in fact it was directly subordinate to Stalin. Golikov's reports were sent directly

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to him, allegedly bypassing the leadership of the General Staff. In this regard, it is argued that many military intelligence data did not reach the military at all and therefore could not be taken into account by them in operational planning. This statement is not true. So, according to the testimony of the former head of the information department of the Intelligence Directorate, Lieutenant Colonel V.A. Recruit military intelligence carefully monitored the situation in the theaters of war. Data on the armed forces of potential adversaries were summarized, analyzed and reflected in monthly reconnaissance reports, which were approved by the head of the department. These intelligence reports were sent to all members of the government and the Politburo, to the General Staff, to the central departments of the People's Commissariat of Defense, to the headquarters of the military districts and to formations up to and including the headquarters of the corps. Another thing is that Golikov, fearing to contradict Stalin's opinion, softened the conclusions of his subordinates in every possible way, declaring many of the information disinformation.

At the same time, Stalin himself had much greater confidence in the agents working along the lines of the NKVD and the NKGB, and closely followed their work. But the KGB intelligence, like the military, was also completely destroyed by the recent repressions. Her then condition is frankly described in a top secret report of the 1st (intelligence) department of the People's Commissariat of State Security for the period from 1939 to April 1941:

"By the beginning of 1939, as a result of the exposure of the enemy leadership at that time of the Foreign Department, almost all residents abroad were recalled and suspended from work. Most of them were then arrested, and the rest were subject to verification. There was no question of any intelligence work behind the cordon in this situation. The task was to, along with the creation of the apparatus of the Department itself, to create the apparatus of residencies behind the cordon" [451].

It is very difficult to recreate the destroyed intelligence network abroad. This requires many years of painstaking work of true professionals in their field. Besides

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Chekists dealt mainly with political issues, understanding them much better than military ones. All these intelligence problems undoubtedly contributed to

fatal mistake in determining the direction of the main attack of the Wehrmacht, with all the ensuing tragic consequences.

In [A section of the plan of the General Staff, the basics of the strategic deployment of our troops with their distribution according to the theaters of military operations were outlined (see Table 6.2).

The total number of divisions and the proportion of formations deployed in the West, including Finland, increased noticeably under the new plan. It should only be noted that the previous plan provided, in addition to those listed in the table, the deployment of 40 additional rifle divisions in the West and two in the East during the first month of the war. Let us add that the appearance of 30 Japanese infantry divisions, from among those included in the table, in Northern Manchuria was expected only by the end of the second month from the beginning of the concentration, so the ratio of forces in the Far East at the first stage of hostilities was assumed to be almost equal. Before the Soviet troops in the Far Eastern theater of operations, the task was to destroy the first echelon of the Japanese army even before the concentration of its second echelon [452].

Thus, the southwestern strategic direction was finally chosen as the main one. This was the largest strategic miscalculation of the political (primarily) and military leadership of the country, which largely predetermined the further course of the Great Patriotic War. In the situation of Stalin's indisputable authority, which had strengthened in recent years, a free discussion of the most important problems of preparing the army and navy for war was impossible. Leapfrog with the change of leaders in NGOs also did not contribute to the development of plans that are most appropriate to the current situation. It is especially clearly illustrated by the example of the operational management of the General Staff, this core of the "brain of the army." During the six pre-war years, seven chiefs changed there [453]. Immediately before the war, almost the entire leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense, the General Staff, the main and central directorates, military intelligence, the command of the troops of military districts and fleets was replaced. lead

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the practical implementation of the measures outlined by the new plan, since February 1941, had to be General of the Army G.K. Zhukov. In this regard, they sometimes say, what could Zhukov do in the five and a half months remaining before the start of the war, if everything was decided by his predecessors and the "highest authority", that is, Stalin?

Meanwhile, some researchers do not agree with the very expression "miscalculation" in relation to the choice of the southwestern direction as the main one. In their opinion, Stalin in the autumn of 1940 and even in the spring of 1941 did not allow the possibility of a German attack on the Soviet Union. Firstly, by the fact that Germany continued the futile struggle with Britain, and secondly, he knew that in terms of the balance of forces and resources, the Red Army was much stronger than the Wehrmacht. Consequently, there was no need to consider the southwestern strategic direction as the main one during the German attack on the USSR, because such actions were not expected from Hitler (?!). Therefore, the operational deployment of 1941, which the January staff games allegedly showed personally, was built, as they believe, on the idea of a sudden and crushing invasion of Europe by the Red Army. However, the blow of the Wehrmacht, which de facto objectively turned out to be pre-emptive, crossed out this failed invasion, making all the plans and intentions of Stalin meaningless. Hence the conclusion is drawn: the concentration of the main forces of the Red Army in the southwestern strategic direction by June 22, 1941 is not a "miscalculation" in determining the main operational direction of the potential enemy, but a natural consequence of the vicious military-political aspirations of Stalin and the leadership of the CPSU (b). And the General Staff and the People's Commissariat of Defense, starting from August 1939, acted here only as instruments for implementing the plans of the "Master", the Central Committee and the Politburo.

Proponents of this point of view, firstly, misinterpret the theme of games. What, in their opinion, should the Red Army, having repulsed the first blow of the aggressor, continue and further carry out only defensive actions? Secondly, they intentionally or unwittingly put a completely different meaning into the controversial thesis about "miscalculation". And it did not consist in strengthening the southwestern direction: it is natural to strengthen the front in the probable direction of the enemy's main attack.

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The miscalculation consisted in an incorrect assessment of the intentions of the pro-

enemy and, accordingly, in the weakening of the western strategic direction, which became one of the main reasons for a whole series of disasters in 1941. As for the idea of a sudden and crushing invasion of the Red Army in Europe in 1941, allegedly planned by Stalin (at the suggestion of Timoshenko and Zhukov) , we will consider this issue in more detail later. In the meantime, we note that the March plan, for an unknown reason, was not approved by Stalin [454].

According to the results of operational games in the General Staff, held in January 1941, appropriate adjustments were made to subsequent plans of military operations, but the southwestern strategic direction invariably remained the main one. At its core, the accepted distribution of forces along axes did not change until the start of the war. The war, however, proved the correctness of Shaposhnikov's prediction: the Germans delivered the main blow, as he expected, north of the Pripjat swamps, through Minsk to Moscow. They did not plan to wage a war of attrition against the USSR. And for the next blitzkrieg, economic goals were not in the foreground - it was considered the main thing to defeat the armed forces of the enemy, and the rest would follow. Having incorrectly determined the probable direction of the enemy's main attack, our command incorrectly distributed its forces, weakening the most important western strategic direction. This brought the Red Army to the brink of complete defeat.

Development of mobilization plans. The strategic deployment plan and the concept of the first strategic operations were designed for the complete mobilization of the Red Army before the start of hostilities. A systematic and timely transition from the organization and states of the army in peacetime to the organization and states of wartime was carried out on the basis of a mobilization plan, the existence of which is one of the conditions for ensuring the defense capability of the state. In other words, a mobplan is a plan to transfer the armed forces to a state that ensures the fulfillment of the tasks determined by the strategic deployment plan, and the country's economy to a wartime track. It includes mobilization activities: the supply and reception of a draft contingent, auto-tractor

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equipment and horses from the national economy, the delivery (acceptance) of military camps, the deployment of military schools and their transfer to an accelerated period of training, the transition of enterprises of the national economy to the production of military products, etc. Without a mobilization plan, it is impossible to ensure the full combat readiness of the troops: the most intelligent and deeply thought-out operational-strategic plans may turn out to be fruitless if they are not backed up by human and material and technical resources. The mobilization plan depended on the mobilization capabilities of the country, which, changing, in turn influenced the plans for the strategic deployment of the armed forces.

During the period under review, the mobilization possibilities of the USSR were determined by the progress in fulfilling the plans of the third five-year plan (1938-1942). At its beginning, the mobilization plan of the Red Army for 1938-1939 was in effect. MP-22, approved by the Defense Committee on November 29, 1937. According to him, the number of the Red Army in peacetime to | | January 1939 was brought to 1,665,790 people, and in the event of war it was supposed to reach 6,503,500 fighters. During the mobilization, it was planned to deploy 170 rifle and 29 cavalry divisions, 31 tank brigades, including four heavy ones, 155 air brigades, and 100 artillery regiments, of which 57 were corps, and the rest were RGCs. It was planned to have 15,613 tanks, 15,218 guns and 305,780 vehicles in service. In addition, it was planned to form another 30 rifle divisions, four RGK artillery regiments and 80 air brigades of the second stage [455].

According to this plan, a partial mobilization of seven districts was carried out in September 1939. The troops of the active army were also deployed on its basis during the war with Finland. Major changes in the composition and deployment of the troops of the districts, as well as the reorganization of the military commissariats, carried out on the basis of the Law on universal military duty, adopted on September 1, 1939, required an immediate revision of the mobilization plan. However, the work on creating a new plan was unacceptably delayed. The following documents testify to this. In the act of transfer of the People's Commissariat of Defense K.E. Voroshilov to the new People's Commissar S.K. Timoshenko in May 1940 stated:

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"In connection with the war and a significant redeployment of troops, the mobilization plan has been violated. The People's Commissariat of Defense does not have a new mobilization plan.

Measures for mobilization by administrative order have not been completed by the development" [456].

The same was noted in the act of transferring the General Staff to B.M. Shaposhnikov K.A. Meretskov in August 1940:

"In connection with the holding of organizational events, the redeployment of units and the change in the boundaries of military districts, the current mob plan has been fundamentally violated and requires complete revision. At present, the army has no mobilization plan" [457].

The lack of a mobile plan led to a sharp decrease in the mobilization readiness of the armed forces, calling into question the reality of strategic and operational deployment plans, the implementation of which is impossible without the timely supply of human and material and technical resources. The newly appointed leadership of the NPO immediately began to develop a new mobplan (MP-40). But time

I was missed. In addition, the NPO mobilization request submitted in June 1940, which has not yet been finally approved by the Defense Committee, is outdated due to significant changes in the organizational deployment scheme and required revision. And a new application for the main types of weapons and military equipment could be submitted within 10 days only after the approval of the organizational deployment scheme. Organizational deployment schemes determined the order of deployment of military district (army) troops, their composition, deployment, and readiness dates. The commander of the troops of the district (army) and his deputies, a member of the Military Council, the chief of staff and his deputies, heads of departments and departments were allowed to work with them in full - in the scope of their official activities. Only extracts from these schemes were sent to military units.

On February 7, 1940, the districts were notified that instructions for the development of new mobplanes would be given simultaneously with the new deployment scheme. Due to the frequent changes in deployment patterns, it was necessary to reconsider mobile

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lisation plans, both general and private. How much this complicated the development of mobilization plans can be seen from the example of the tank troops of the Red Army, which on the eve of the war underwent repeated and most radical transformations.

The impressive results of the 1940 campaign in the West brought about urgent changes in the organizational structure of the Red Army. The main striking force of the Wehrmacht there were motorized corps, consisting of tank and motorized divisions. It is not surprising that even at the height of the fighting in France, on May 21, 1940, Stalin summoned Shaposhnikov, the head of the Red Army headquarters, his deputy I.V. Smorodinov and the head of the ABTU of the Red Army D.G. Pavlova. He instructed them to immediately form several tank corps in the likeness of the German ones. According to Stalin, it was necessary to include two tank and one motorized rifle divisions in the corps. In their tank regiments, he wished to have at least 200 tanks, and in total in the corps - 1000-1200 tanks. It should be noted that just six months ago, Soviet tank corps, consisting of two tank and one motorized brigades and armed with 560 tanks, were recognized as too bulky and difficult to control. Actually, this was the main reason for their disbandment. Smorodinov, together with Pavlov, sat down to draw up the staffs of future formations. Already on May 27, Timoshenko and Shaposhnikov arrived at Stalin's reception with a detailed proposal to form six tank corps. Each of them was supposed to be armed with 1030 tanks. In addition to two tank and one motorized divisions, it included a motorcycle regiment, a road battalion and a communications battalion, as well as a reconnaissance air squadron. To Stalin, the number of proposed connections seemed insufficient, therefore, through

five days the project was substantially revised.

The new option provided for the formation of eight tank corps of the proposed composition. They were planned to be distributed as follows: the Byelorussian and Kiev military districts received two corps each, and the Leningrad, Odessa, Moscow and Transbaikalian military districts received one each. In addition to the corps, two separate tank divisions were created

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for the Transcaucasian and Central Asian military districts. Five directorates of rifle and two directorates of cavalry corps, six rifle and five cavalry divisions, 17 tank brigades, as well as four motorized divisions that existed by that time, applied for the formation of all these new formations. In addition to them, the tank troops of the Red Army retained 26 tank brigades, three armored brigades, a training regiment and battalion, and 18 tank battalions of rifle divisions [458]. This time, Stalin's approval was received, and on June 9 Timoshenko approved the plan for the formation of new corps and sent the appropriate orders to the districts. At the same time, instead of tank ones, they decided to call them mechanized.

It was a timely and correct undertaking, which had a solid material base. The USSR at that time had quite a sufficient amount of military equipment, equipment and transport for their full staffing. Enough for them and trained personnel and command staff. Therefore, by the beginning of October 1940, their states were completely filled with people, although the situation with military equipment was somewhat worse. Half of the mech corps received 83-102% of regular tanks, three more - 61-78%, and only one had only 47% available [459]. Under these conditions, a decision arose not only to finally complete the equipment of the first eight mechanized corps, but also to form more of these powerful formations on the basis of available resources. This decision followed without delay.

In August 1940, a resolution of the party and government "On the plan for the accumulation of state reserves and mob reserves for 1940" was adopted. The next version of the mobilization plan was prepared by September 1940. It took into account the results of the just ended campaign in the West and was linked to the already mentioned draft operational plan for the war, which, after significant changes in the distribution of troops in directions, was approved on October 14. At the same time, the MP-40 mobplan was approved, according to which it was planned to form fifty air divisions, three corps and one air defense division. He secured the appearance in the Red Army, which was almost completed by this time.

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eight mechanized corps and two separate tank divisions. After mobilization, the strength of the Red Army was to reach 8,678,135 people [460]. During the first three months of the war, it was planned to form another 30 rifle divisions and eight directorates of rifle corps, and in the next nine months - an additional 30 rifle divisions and seven directorates of rifle corps, four tank and two motorized divisions, as well as a number of other units and connections. Thus, by the end of the first year of the war, the Red Army was to have 80 rifle and 10 mechanized corps, and a total of 292 different divisions of the ground forces [461].

On the same day, Timoshenko and Meretskov sent proposals to the Politburo and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR on the creation of new units and formations. The largest of them was another, the ninth mechanized corps, intended for KOVO. In order to strengthen the artillery of the RGC, it was proposed to form three 122-mm cannon, four 152-mm howitzer, one 203-mm howitzer artillery regiments, one 210-mm cannon, three 280-mm howitzer and one 305-mm howitzer artillery division. In addition, it was proposed to additionally form eight corps artillery regiments (this made it possible to bring their total number to 73 in peacetime and 83 in wartime). Moreover, the corps and artillery regiments of the RGK in the ZakVO, North Caucasian Military District, OdVO, KOVO, ZapOVO and PribOVO were proposed to be maintained partly in wartime states, and partly in 80% of these states, which ensured their increased combat readiness. To fight enemy tanks, it was planned to form 20 machine-gun and artillery motorized brigades. 20 newly created separate tank brigades T-26 were intended to reinforce and escort infantry in battle. Their addition to the already existing formations made it possible to provide each rifle corps with a brigade of tanks for direct infantry support. The new formations were planned to be ready by the beginning of the summer of 1941. Based on the experience gained in the exercises, it was planned to reorganize the six existing airborne brigades into more powerful brigades capable of operating independently. According to the plan, the creation of parts should have been completed by May 1, 1941, and both

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to bake their material part by October 1, 1941. The number of the Red Army in peacetime was set at 3,574,705 people [462]. On October 16, all these proposals were approved.

In connection with the change in some provisions of the operational plan, the mobplan had to be reworked. According to its new version, presented on January 23, 1941, it was proposed to increase the strength of the Red Army by wartime states to 10,058,791 people, to increase the number of rifle divisions to 209 (an increase of 42 divisions), and the number of mechanized corps to nine (an increase of one mk),

air divisions - up to 79 (increase by 24 AD), air regiments - up to 343 (increase by 10 ap) [463]. The number of military equipment also increased accordingly. But even this version of the plan did not receive official approval from the military and political leadership. Apparently, because it did not reflect the new views of the participants in the just completed operational-strategic training of the highest command staff of the Red Army. In particular, at the training camp the line for the creation of large mechanized formations capable of independently solving operational and tactical tasks within the framework of a deep offensive operation was approved.

At the same time, work was underway at the General Staff to draw up a mobplan for 1941. The decision to develop it was made at a meeting of the Main Military Council of the Red Army on August 16, 1940. Its completion date was scheduled for May 1, 1941 [464]. A little earlier - on June 20, 1940 - by order of the NPO No. 0130, the "Manual on the mobilization work of military units, departments and institutions of the Red Army" was adopted and put into effect. It is significant that a year before the start of the war, in the very first paragraph of the "Manuals ..." a very topical conclusion was made:

"1. A war against the USSR, which is in a capitalist encirclement, "may break out unexpectedly. Now wars are not declared. They just start" (Stalin).

Therefore, the basis for the preparation of the Red Army for the defense of the socialist state was Comrade Stalin's instructions that "our entire people must be kept in a state of mobilization

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readiness in the face of the danger of a military attack, so that no "accident" and no tricks of our external enemies could take us by surprise ... (Stalin)" [465].

Unfortunately, this important conclusion remained a mere declaration and was not taken into account in the main plans of the General Staff. The result is known - the German attack on June 22 took the army by surprise.

According to the Manual, mobilization was divided into two types in terms of the volume of measures taken: general, when it concerned the entire Red Army and affected the entire territory of the USSR, and partial, when it concerned one or more military districts or individual military formations and affected only part of the territory of the USSR. The greatest importance in mobwork was given to reducing the time and ensuring the secrecy of ongoing activities. Depending on the order in which the mobilization was carried out, mobilization was divided into open mobilization, when the decision to carry it out is brought to the general knowledge of the citizens of the Soviet Union and the mobilization of troops is carried out openly. Notice-

The announcement of open mobilization was transmitted through the usual channels of communication. In those cases when, in the interests of the country's defense, mobilization is required to be carried out covertly, mobilization is carried out without making it known to the general public and without disclosing the real purpose of the measures being taken. Covert mobilization was carried out with the receipt by the commanders of units and formations of encrypted mobilization telegrams or under the guise of "large training camps" (BUS).

In connection with the ongoing reorganization of the rifle, tank troops, air defense and air forces, as well as with the significant movement of troops in and between districts, it was necessary to develop a new scheme for the mobilization deployment of the Red Army. It was based on the possibility of mobilizing troops in queues and each district separately within the time limits that were established depending on the deployment of formations (units) and their operational mission.

With the approval of the scheme for the mobilization deployment of the Red Army, concrete work on the creation of a mobile

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the plan was just beginning. After all, in order to plan the supply of mobile resources in terms of people, weapons and equipment, one must first determine: from where, where, how and in what time frame they should be submitted. It is no coincidence that the draft Decree read: "All mobilization developments according to the new mob plan should be started immediately, with the expectation that all work, both in the center and in the field, will be completed by July 1, 1941." When the work on the ground practically began, we will show below, especially since the government had to adopt additional resolutions on some indicators of the mobplan.

From May 1940 to June 1941, mobplanes were radically reworked four times. Before that, in September 1939, in connection with the adoption of the Law on universal military duty, the military commissariats were reorganized. This and the arrival of new workers to replace those who were repressed and retired gave rise to new difficulties. The quality of the prepared documents was low due to numerous errors, inconsistencies, inaccurate calculations, etc. Mobplane MP-41, due to continuous organizational measures, was born for a long time and with difficulty. The combat composition, strength and armament of units and formations, their places of deployment have changed.

A new stage in Soviet military construction began with the appointment of the Chief of the [General Staff of the Civil Code. Zhukov, who officially assumed the high post on February 1, 1941. Already on the 12th of the same month [the General Staff presented to the Soviet leadership a new scheme for the mobilization deployment of the Red Army for 1941.

but her number of personnel of the Red Army after the mobile
zation compared with the previous plan increased very slightly: from 8,678,135 to
8,682,827 people, but the number of divisions exceeded 300. The main variants of the new mobplan
are compared with the previous one in table 6.3.

'
In order to achieve the secrecy of development, the mobplan of 1941 was given the name: for the
Red Army - "Mobplan No. 23", for civilian people's commissariats - "Mobplan No. 9%". We will continue to
use the name - mobplane MP-41.

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Table 6.3

MAIN DATA OF MOB-PLANE MP-41 VARIANTS AND THEIR
CHANGES COMPARED WITH MP-40

I S I
Time of development (adoption) RU t - Ro .06.

Ground troops

[armies | 27 [rifle |
61 [mechanized | 8 airborne

buildings

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8 PV

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THX

machine-gun artillery motorized

separate anti-tank

high artillery RGK total

Corps artillery regiments 75 Artillery
regiments of the RGK Separate divisions
of BM in

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29
62
29
4
5
177

2 31
4
303
33
94
72
15

Continuation of the table.

IE VOI

Time of development (adoption) RU a s | 2-daochi 06/01/1941

Air Force

[Aviation colua | | 5 | 5 | 8 [Aviation brie | 1 |

No. | 5 | 5

Sources: [466].

The troops were to have 61,223 guns, 45,576 mortars, 36,879 tanks, 10,679 armored vehicles, 22,171 aircraft in front-line and 10,284 in rear aviation, 90,847 tractors, 595,021 thousand cars, 49,940 gasoline and oil and water tankers, 6,487 petrol trailers and 65,955 motorcycles. Established number of horse composition was | | 136,948 heads, of which: riding horses - 288,732, artillery - 274,921, baggage - 573,295 [467].

The NGOs and the General Staff addressed the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Party and the Government with a note outlining a new scheme for the mobilization deployment of the Red Army. At the same time (February 12, 1941), the Draft Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR "On the mobilization plan for 1941" was presented [468]. Some historians mistakenly believe that the mobilization plan for 1941 was approved on February 12th. In our opinion (and this follows from the text of the note and the Draft), only the scheme of mobilization deployment was approved, in which the volume of the mobilization deployment of the Red Army for 1941 was established in the event of a general mobilization in the most general form. Others

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In other words, only the framework (tasks) of the mobplane were defined, as a result of which a wartime army of the proposed composition should be created. It was still very far from a detailed plan for the mobilization of the armed forces. These are by no means linguistic differences in terms. Ultimately, the mobilization and combat readiness of the Red Army for war depended on the thoroughness and degree of development of the mobplane.

Work in the military districts began only with the receipt of the relevant directives from the General Staff with schemes for the deployment of district troops. In March, they were ordered to submit the exact locations and areas of deployment of formations and units and updated schemes for their deployment, with the calculation of the readiness of the mobplane for | May 1941. Military units and institutions, in turn, began to work with obtaining extracts from the deployment schemes from the district headquarters. Field work, due to its significant volume and the need for numerous approvals, did not keep pace with frequent changes at all.

niami in the destination and dislocation of compounds and parts. There were reports from the troops and headquarters that, due to the lack of new staffs, norms and tables of weapons, it was impossible to plan the need for personnel, weapons and equipment. In order not to waste time, the directive of the NPO ordered the troops and local military authorities (republican and regional military registration and enlistment offices) to prepare all calculations and requests for the supply of mobile resources of personnel, weapons and military equipment based on the calculations of the MP-40 mobplane [469].

The delay in the preparation of guiding documents for the development of mobilization plans in the General Staff and the districts led to the fact that the troops had too little time for practical organizational work. In this regard, the deadline for completing all work, both in the center and in the field, was postponed from May 1 to July 1, 1941.

The Commander of PribOvVO, in connection with the development of mobplanes in parts, gave the following instructions:

"<...> according to" MP-4b, develop plans for manning [units] to wartime states in detail <...>. Aviation, mechanical units and air defense units to be kept in constant combat readiness <...>.

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Report:

- by 15.6 on the development of mobplans of military units and military registration and enlistment offices;

- by 5.7 - to submit a report on readiness to the NPO" [470].

Mobplan of 1941 provided for mobilization, in accordance with the Manual on Mobilization, in two ways:

a) the first option is the covert mobilization of individual military districts, separate units and formations, established by a special decision of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR - under the guise of the so-called "Great training camps" (BUS). In this case, the conscription of military reserve, as well as the delivery of vehicles and horses assigned to parts, is carried out by personal summonses, without announcing the orders of NPOs. This made it possible to mobilize, if necessary, each unit separately, regardless of the planned timing of its readiness.

6) the second option is the general mobilization of all the Armed Forces of the USSR or individual military districts in an open manner after the announcement of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. In this case, the conscription of persons liable for military service is carried out by orders of the people's commissar of defense,

pasted for general information (in accordance with Articles 72-73 of the Law on universal military duty) [471].

The mobilization of the Red Army was planned to be carried out within a month with a queue of four echelons. The troops of the covering armies deployed along the western border were to be the first to reach full combat readiness. They accounted for 25-30% of all combat units and formations of the Red Army and already in peacetime had 70-80% of the wartime staff. Once the first echelon turned in two stages. The permanent personnel of his tank, motorized and cavalry divisions were obliged to act on alarm within 2-4 hours after receiving the order. During the same time, the garrisons of the fortified areas of the first line, airborne troops, over 75% of the Air Force units, 85% of the air defense troops and 34 artillery regiments were to prepare for the campaign and battle.

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RGK. Tank units of the first echelon received two additional hours for training, and in winter even four hours.

The priority formations included all combat units with most of the personnel, the necessary personnel and funds for economic, technical, sanitary and veterinary services, as well as all military equipment (tanks, guns, machine guns, charging boxes, etc.), which could be raised and provided in cash in parts by vehicles. Replenishments (human or vehicles) that managed to arrive at the unit by the time of readiness of the first echelon were also included in its composition. The remaining troops, which were part of the first echelon, were to complete the mobilization within the first three days. These included military reserves, transport and materiel received from the national economy, the remaining part of the personnel (and material resources) needed to carry out mobilization work, receive reinforcements and deliver them in the form of marching teams to join the first echelon, as well as rear units.

The second echelon included tank and motorized formations that were not included in the first echelon, 109 rifle and mountain rifle divisions, which were maintained in a reinforced state, as well as army reinforcement and combat support units, including rear formations and institutions. They were given from four to seven days for mobilization. The third echelon, 8-15 days after the announcement of mobilization, deployed rear and spare units, as well as repair bases of front-line subordination. The last, fourth echelon, in the period from 16 to 30 days, all other formations and units, including stationary hospitals, reached combat readiness [472]. Thus, out of 303 divisions available in the Red Army, 172 should have been fully ready on the 2nd, 3rd or 4th day of mobilization, and also

60 - on the 4-5th day [473]. Note that all these calculations were compiled (and verified) for peacetime conditions; in a combat situation, they turned out to be far from real.

The schedule for achieving combat readiness for the rest of the formations was also very tight. For example, here's how to break up

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a rifle regiment, part of a rifle division of 6,000 men (staff No. 4/120), was trained:

The first three days - arrival at the assigned staff;

4th day - cohesion of units;

5th day - completion of formation, combat training;

6th day - completion of coordination of units, preparation for tactical exercises;

7-8th day - battalion tactical exercises;

9-10 days - regimental tactical exercises [474].

The entire division reached the required level of combat effectiveness in 20-30 days. During this time, in addition to 5864 fighters and commanders of the cadre, she received six thousand reservists. At their expense, the missing rifle companies were formed, the crews of guns and mortars were understaffed, the rear and wagon trains were deployed. In addition, up to 400 vehicles and about two thousand horses were supplied to the division. Even after all the replenishment, the personnel of such a division still fell short of the full staff by about two and a half thousand people, but for wartime this was considered quite sufficient.

According to the requirements of the Manual on Mobilization, military units during the camp period, as a rule, for mobilization, had to return to winter quarters according to a previously developed plan, where there were stocks of weapons and materiel of "NZ". In this regard, the commander of PribOVO gave the following order:

"By June 1, 1941, have brief and realistic ideas about the mobilization of units and formations in the event that mobilization is announced during the camp period.

Report by 5.6.41." [475].

Additionally, he ordered a list of units to be mobilized for covert and open mobilization in the camps.

The main flaw in the operational-strategic and mobile

lization planning for 1941 was based on the assumption that the enemy, when preparing an attack on the USSR, would need up to 15 days for the full strategic deployment of troops. In fact

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the Wehrmacht by the time of the invasion was basically fully deployed.

On February 21, 1941, the General Staff handed over all the necessary documents on military transportation of troops to the period of mobilization to the People's Commissariat of Railways [476]. Specialists of the General Staff and the NIS jointly prepared schedules for the transfer of troops and material resources from the places of deployment to the areas assigned to them according to the operational plan. To do this, it was planned to allocate and timely deliver to the places of loading a sufficient number of trains with the beginning of mobilization. The locomotives for them were supposed to arrive at the Western Railway from the third day of mobilization, simultaneously with an increase in the volume of military transport. To ensure the loading and unloading of troops, military and transport equipment, ammunition and other materiel, the required number of collapsible military platforms were manufactured and put into reserve [477].

However, in connection with the reorganization, rearmament and changes in deployment schemes, the staffs of units and formations and points (areas) of their deployment changed. This means that the places and dates for the supply of mobile resources during the mobilization of troops and their transfer to wartime states changed. All calculations and agreements on the supply of mobile resources worked out by February-March 1941, for the most part, turned out to be useless, since they no longer corresponded to the approved deadlines for bringing units and formations to combat readiness. In addition, newly formed units appeared in the districts and, conversely, some units were disbanded.

In the western border districts in the newly annexed territories, there was a shortage of military resources for military servicemen, especially for specialists from military branches. Therefore, it was necessary to plan their postscript from the interior regions of the country. In connection with the discrepancy between the distribution of resources of those liable for military service and the need for them, it became necessary to carry out inter-district transportation in the amount: to the east - up to 500,000 people and to the west - 300,000-400,000 people [478]. And this led to an increase in the load on railway transport and a significant increase in the timing of the supply of human resources. In order to resolve this contradiction, the ZapoVO followed by an indication:

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"<...> The indigenous inhabitants of the territory of Western Belarus liable for military service are allowed, with careful selection,

to pay for the staffing of combat units, if it is impossible for them to import other resources due to the terms of readiness, and for the staffing of rear units and institutions, including military rear services" [479].

At the same time, after a thorough check, local nationalities liable for military service were allowed to be assigned to combat and rear units dispersedly, without creating national units. Similar instructions were given to other districts.

The issue was solved in a completely different way with respect to the former national armies of the Baltic states, attached to the USSR. Based on the decision of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, by order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 019] dated August 17, 1940, the armies of the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian SSRs were transformed into rifle territorial corps. It was supposed to clear them of unreliable elements within one year and, after retraining the command staff, turn them into extraterritorial units formed on a common basis. From the formations of the former Estonian army, the 22nd sk was formed, which became part of the 27th army '. Accordingly, the 24th Latvian and 29th Lithuanian corps were also formed, each consisting of two rifle divisions of 6,000 men. In each corps (together with corps units) there were 15,142 people.

The commander of the PribOVO troops, in connection with the development of mobplanes in parts of the district, gave the following instructions:

<...> 7. Parts 22, 24 and 29 of sk mobplanes are not developed. I categorically forbid conducting mobilization correspondence with these units" [480].

'
By the beginning of the war, the 22nd sk included: 180th and 182nd rifle divisions, 614th cap, 103rd rear, 202nd osapb, 415th obs, 22nd okae.

2? 24th Latvian sk (27th army): 181st and 183rd rifle divisions, 613th cap, 111th rear, 511th osapb, 305th obs. 29th Lithuanian sk (11th army): 179th and 184th sd, 615th cap, 306 osapb, 473rd obs. In addition to the above units, the Latvian and Lithuanian corps included one cavalry regiment of 1175 people each.

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Recruitment of parts of the Red Army command staff by state
wartime was planned to be carried out by moving the staff within the unit, as a rule, one step higher (and allocating it to other units), reducing the shortfall to lower positions, which were replaced by commanders called up from the reserve. The assignment of personnel for units that do not exist in peacetime, according to the instructions, was carried out to those units that were entrusted with their formation. For example, the 56th corps artillery regiment of the ZapOVO, contained

in peacetime according to the state 8/42-A, was supposed to turn around according to the state of wartime (08/40) on the third day of mobilization (M-3). At the same time, the 29th Artillery Regiment (according to the wartime staff 08/41) with an artillery fleet was deployed at its base to the M-6, and the 39th Reserve Artillery Regiment, to the M-10, the command staff for which was already allocated by order of the district [481].

In general, for the implementation of the MP-41 mobplan, it was necessary to call up to 5 million people from the reserve, including about 600 thousand commanders and 885 thousand people of junior authorities. In connection with the reorganization and re-equipment of the troops, the reserves did not fully meet the increased needs of the armed forces in a qualitative sense. First of all, this concerned the majority of reserve commanders who needed retraining. In September 1940, the task of training the reserve servicemen was shifted from Osoaviakhim directly to the Red Army. But in the short time allotted before the start of the war, little was done. A rare exception was the gathering of 25,000 junior commanders held in 1941.

After the mobilization was announced, those liable for military service were ordered, bypassing the military registration and enlistment offices, to report directly to their units. At the same time, just in case, 15% more people were sent there than required by the state. Such a measure did not justify itself: some units were understaffed, while others received an excess of personnel. In addition, this made it difficult for the military registration and enlistment offices to control the appearance of conscripts and did not give them the opportunity to take timely measures to search for draft evaders. And there were many. Only in the ZapVO and KOVO and

Many henchmen did not arrive in their units not by malicious intent, they simply did not find them in connection with the outbreak of hostilities.

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more than 200 thousand mobilized did not appear in their units. For the same reason, 3902 reserve officers arrived on the Western Front, or only 44% of their required number [482].

The development of the MP-41 was further complicated by the fact that its most important part was the mobilization plan for the deployment of the military industry, which in the spring of 1941 lay for more than a month in the desk of the Chairman of the Defense Committee K.E. Voroshilova, was never worked out by the beginning of the war [483]. Suffice it to say that the Decree of the Central Committee of the Party and the Government "On the Plan for the Accumulation of State Reserves and Mob Reserves for 1941" was adopted only in June. And our industry, only on the eve of the war, partially transferred to the expanded production of military equipment, weapons, ammunition, did not have time to provide the newly formed and deployed formations with the necessary types of weapons, including air defense and anti-tank defense, communications, as well as automotive equipment. Therefore, a significant part of the formations by the beginning of the war remained

understaffed personnel, weapons and military equipment, even in peacetime states, not to mention military. As a result, already in peacetime, a large number of limited combat-ready or even non-combat-ready units and formations appeared. The mobilization announced after the start of the war, not provided with human and material resources and carried out in conditions very far from peacetime, only multiplied their number.

By June 22, 1941, the staffing of the Red Army was 61% of the wartime staff, and even less in the western border military districts, only 55%. The stocks of military equipment and weapons available in the troops and in warehouses made it possible to provide the army after mobilization with artillery guns - by 75-96%, tanks - by 61%, combat aircraft - by 67%, machine guns and heavy machine guns - by 30% of the regular needs. Yes, and this level could be achieved only if the planned plans for the supply of mobile resources were fully implemented. Transport was no better. Even taking into account the full implementation of the plan for the supply of equipment from the national economy, the army lacked 32% of cars and 55% of tractors [484].

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The most tense situation with the provision of artillery units with mechanized transport and means of mechanized traction has developed in the western border districts. Due to the underdevelopment of collective farms and the absence of MTS in the newly annexed territories, autotractor equipment could be supplied mainly only from the regions of the European part of the USSR. In order to provide these districts, it was necessary to plan the transportation of up to 100,000 units of mechanical transport. But the timing of their possible delivery from home areas often significantly exceeded the established deadlines for the mob readiness of units. For example, the term for the readiness of a unit is determined by M-3, and the arrival of equipment and mechanized transport is not earlier than M-5. In many cases, the mechtyag had to be replaced by a horse-drawn one. But not everything was so simple with horses. Here is what was said about them in the MP-41 mobplane:

"The need for horses to complete units up to wartime states is 671,770 horses.

To cover this need, up to 20% of the number of fit horses must be withdrawn from the national economy" [485].

The solution of these issues rested on the low capacity of the railways of the western direction. For example, in KOVO at st. Zhmerinka from the east could approach 100-120 pairs of trains every day, and half as many went to the west. The same is true for Art. Korosten, respectively - 96 and 48 pairs of trains. A similar position of the layer

lived in other western military districts. The border railway areas were poorly adapted to the mass unloading of troops, which limited the possibility of supplying supplies in peacetime and carrying out operational transport of troops in wartime. Thus, the throughput capacity of the Lithuanian railway approaching the border was only 84 trains per day. For comparison, German railways leading to the Lithuanian border were able to handle 220 trains per day.

After the mobilization deployment, the strength of the Red Army was to be 8.9 million personnel, 32,628 aircraft (of which 22,171 were combat), over

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106 thousand guns and mortars, about 37 thousand tanks, 10,679 armored vehicles, about 91 thousand tractors, 595 thousand cars. The work to ensure the supply of mobile resources in such a huge volume had to be carried out in a short time and in extremely difficult conditions. Unfortunately, it was not possible to radically solve the acute problem of their shortage by the beginning of the war. All this made the mobilization plans unrealistic. As a result of ongoing changes in deployment schemes and various kinds of inconsistencies between the General Staff, people's commissariats and mob workers in the field, the development of the MP-41 by June 1941 was not fully completed by June 1941. And the Red Army entered the war with an incompletely finalized and unapproved mobilization

plan.

REORGANIZATION OF THE RED ARMY ON THE EVE OF THE WAR

The delay with the end of the Soviet-Finnish war, and then the events in Bessarabia and the Baltic states again did not allow the reorganization of the Red Army that had begun earlier to be carried out in full. In the Leningrad, Kalinin, Belorussian and Kiev districts, it was thwarted. Meanwhile, the situation of the impending big war demanded to continue the reorganization and rearmament of the troops. But how? After all, any reform of the troops inevitably leads to a decrease in the mobilization and combat readiness of the units and formations that have undergone it. In undertaking a large-scale reorganization, the country's leadership and the command of the Red Army, apparently, did not take into account the increased possibility of drawing the USSR into the war. The rapid growth of new formations took place without taking into account the real possibilities for supplying them with weapons, means of communication and vehicles. The need for mobile resources (personnel, weapons, equipment, horses and baggage) was calculated as the difference between peacetime and wartime staff. At the same time, peacetime shortages were not included in the mob requirement. Already here, the possibility was laid of the entry into battle of incompletely equipped formations and units. This was especially true for readiness.

connections of border districts, which were supposed to

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be the first to meet the enemy. So, in order to meet the approved number of armed forces in peacetime, something had to be reduced. For example, on November 4, 1940, among others, the 120th and 318th GAP 6/m RGK ZapOVO with a total number of 1770 people were transferred from the wartime states to reinforced states No. 8/3. each, but on the other hand they disbanded the art park of the 120th gap of the b / m, and at the same time the 124th gap of the b / m of the RGK [486]. A similar reorganization was carried out in other districts. This had a negative impact on the combat capability of the artillery units of the RGK, intended to reinforce the covering troops.

Not all measures to improve the organizational structure of the troops were sufficiently substantiated and justified. The top military leadership in their undertakings sometimes not moderately shied from side to side. Only recently, after the Polish campaign, four tank corps were disbanded because of their alleged bulkiness (560 battle tanks), and just a year later they decided to form 30 mechanized corps, consisting of more than a thousand tanks each. Hasty and insufficiently thought out decisions were often taken in isolation from the operational-strategic tasks facing the troops. Wishful thinking was taken for real, therefore, the restrictions that were imposed on military development by the existing material possibilities and the situation that was developing on the western border were often neglected. The organizational structure of the troops changed too often and so drastically that it had the most negative impact on their combat capability. In order to trace how the reorganization of the Red Army proceeded in the last months before the war, we will dwell in more detail on its main striking force - the tank troops.

The most important part of the MP-41 plan, which caused the most far-reaching consequences, was the formation of 60 tank and 30 motorized divisions, which made it possible to increase the total number of mechanized corps to 30 [487]. Each of them was supposed to have 1031 tanks according to the state. The plan was approved by Stalin practically without amendments [488], and the formation of all the corps began immediately. This painful process also affected some of the already formed mechanized corps of the first wave. To speed up the creation of new formations, divisions from existing corps were transferred to

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you. For example, from the 4th MK they transferred the 10th TD to the 15th TD, from the 8th to the 16th — the 15th TD, and from the 9th to the 22nd — the 19th TD. To replace them, the 32nd, 34th and 35th tank divisions began to be created, respectively [489]. All existing tank brigades and separate tank regiments, five cavalry divisions, and recently

appeared motorized divisions of rifle troops and machine-gun and artillery motorized brigades, as well as other formations. In order to somehow equip the numerous mechanized corps, combat-ready tanks were collected from wherever they could. Their full-time tank battalions were withdrawn from rifle divisions.

Worst of all, the creation of a huge number of new formations was carried out almost simultaneously. Although the lack of human and material resources still forced the Soviet command to set priorities. 19 mechanized corps, called combat, were considered top-priority for staffing and equipment. 14 of them were intended for the western military districts. Another one was being prepared for the Transcaucasian Military District, one for the Moscow, and the last three, together with two separate divisions - tank and motorized - for the Far East. In addition to them, the formations of the first stage included seven reduced mechanized corps: six for the western districts and one more for the Moscow. The last four reduced mechanized corps were assigned to the second stage. They were supposed to be deployed in the internal military districts of the Soviet Union.

Before the war, there was not enough time, equipment, or trained personnel to complete the staffing of all mechanized corps. The complete equipping of these numerous powerful formations required a huge number of tanks - almost 31,000. Only heavy and medium tanks of new types needed more than 16 thousand. If the rate of production of tanks that existed in 1941 (5220 units) was maintained, it would have been possible to fully equip all the mechanized corps only by the end of 1943 [490]. Didn't the General Staff know the real number of tanks available in the country and the plans for their production? Even by the beginning of 1942, out of 19 combat mechanized corps of the first stage, it was planned to provide tanks for

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the state is only four!. Among the rest of these mechanized corps, three should have received 92-94% of tanks by that time, four - 81-89%, four more - 72-77%, two - 65-69% and the last two - only 52-57%. Of the reduced number of mechanized corps of the first stage, six would then have 10-35% of tanks in service, and one more would have only 1.6%. It is interesting that for some reason this most deprived turned out to be the 20th MK from ZapOVO, whose troops covered the Moscow direction. By 01.01.42, it was planned to transfer from 12 to 30% of the regular number of tanks to the mechanized corps of the reduced composition of the second stage [491].

In other words, it was not possible to provide numerous mechanized corps with materiel within an acceptable time frame. However, this has been known for a long time. Even before the decision was made on the mass formation of mechanized corps, the leadership of the GABTU in a letter addressed to Stalin and Molotov reported that "to staff the tank troops

up to the states of wartime, an additional 7,000 tanks are required to be built, and in wartime the need for the production of tanks will increase significantly. To ensure their production, it was proposed "to create the Allied People's Commissariat of Tank and Automotive Industry on the basis of the People's Commissariat of Medium Machine Building"? [492]. The comprehensive reform of the tank troops greatly increased the need for combat vehicles, and there was nothing to cover them. The colossal resources of Soviet industry were already loaded to the limit with the mass production of tanks. But even this was not enough, so the head of the GABTU of the Red Army, Ya.N. Fedorenko in June 1941, even before the start of the war, proposed to build three new factories for the production of tanks and engines for them. In addition, he demanded to expand the capacities of existing tank enterprises and to involve other plants in the production of tanks [493]. At the same time, the importance and necessity of the production of cars (especially with increased cross-country ability and heavy payload),

'
From the very beginning, only the 1st MK from the LVO and all three mechanized corps and two separate divisions (tank and motorized) in the Far East were fully equipped with tanks from the very beginning.

?> The People's Commissariat of the tank industry of the USSR was created already during the war, on September 11, 1941.

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armored personnel carriers, tractors, self-propelled artillery and anti-aircraft installations, as well as other special equipment, was clearly underestimated. They were produced very little or not at all. The resources of the military industry were absorbed by the non-stop production of tanks. In addition, the mechanized corps were not equipped with auxiliary equipment, transport and communications equipment, and the issues of supplying them with fuel and ammunition were not resolved. All this was postponed until later. As a result, many mechanized corps remained only formally formed. Meanwhile, with the beginning of the war, they were assigned combat missions precisely as formations with great shock and fire POWER AND HIGH MOBILITY.

G.K. Zhukov, in his post-war memoirs, was forced to admit his mistake:

"However, we did not calculate the objective possibilities of our tank industry. <...> There was practically no place to take such a number of cars for one year, there was also a lack of technical, command personnel" [494].

In an excerpt from the manuscript, which was not included in the book, in an attempt to downplay the scale of his miscalculation regarding the newly formed mechanized corps, he writes somewhat differently.

"<...> As a result of incorrect conclusions from the experience of the war in Spain, as well as the war in Finland, at the suggestion

participants in the war, Stalin proposed that the mechanized corps be disbanded and that instead of the corps, the highest unit should be a three-battalion tank brigade. In this matter, the main negative role was played by the head of the armored forces D. Pavlov, S.K. Timoshenko, K.A. Meretskov and other participants in these wars, who were at the head of the command of the Soviet troops. On the basis of the opinions revealed at the meeting of the senior command staff of the Red Army (December 1940), I proposed to correct the mistake made and immediately proceed to the formation of fifteen tank and mechanized corps, which, if necessary, could be reduced to tank armies. Unfortunately, negotiations with the Politburo and personally with Stalin dragged on for two whole months, and only at the beginning of March 1941 was it decided to form fifteen corps, but

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this decision was made only three and a half months before the start of the war! [495].

It turns out that Zhukov proposed to form a total of 15 mechanized corps, which "if necessary, without any special difficulties (highlighted by us. - Auth.) could be reduced to tank armies." Here the former chief of the General Staff is clearly disingenuous - both in terms of the number of mechanized corps, and about the ease of creating tank armies. Then, in the face of the ever-increasing threat of the outbreak of war, he did not see the need to create larger tank formations. The facts show that the procedure for using the existing and newly created mechanized corps - the main strike force of the Red Army - was not thought out.

Here is another fragment from the unpublished manuscript of Marshal G.K. Zhukov:

"<...> And the biggest gap in our military-political strategy was that we did not draw proper conclusions from the experience of the initial period of the Second World War, and the experience was already there. <...> Our General Staff, the People's Commissar of Defense did not study new methods of conducting the initial period of the war, did not give the troops appropriate recommendations for their operational-tactical retraining and processing of outdated plans for operational mobilization and others related to the initial period of the war "[496].

The People's Commissar did not study it, the General Staff did not take it into account, but how did the Chief of the General Staff himself feel about studying the experience of the Wehrmacht in the use of tank corps in the initial period of the war? An interesting fact in this respect is cited in his Notes of a Military Intelligence Officer by V.A. Rookie. He describes the reaction of G.K. Zhukov to a report prepared by scouts

based on the analysis of the "Official Report of the French General Staff on the Franco-German War of 1939-1940", transmitted by the commander-in-chief of the French army

'
From the unpublished memoirs of G.K. Zhukov, written by him with his own hand no later than 1965. The style and spelling of the document have been preserved.

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General Gamelin to the Soviet military attache. Handing over this document, the general said: "Take it, study it and see that you don't suffer the same fate." A whole group of employees of the Information Department worked on studying the experience of this war, and soon the work "On the Franco-German War of 1939-1940." was completed and presented to the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, General G.K. Zhukov. In addition to an analysis of the reasons for the rapid defeat of the French army and the British Expeditionary Force, the report also outlined proposals for the organizational structure of the armed forces of the Soviet Union.

"The answer we received was such that it is embarrassing to write about it. Our report clumsily and illiterately outlined a resolution signed by G.K. Zhukova: "I don't need it. Report how many refuelings of fuel were used for one wheeled vehicle.

After reading this resolution, the officers of the information department shrugged their shoulders and silently looked at each other and at me <...>" [497].

Meanwhile, the report, among other things, contained an analysis of the combat and operational use of the German tank corps and tank groups (essentially tank armies) created for the first time by the Germans, whose strikes confused all the maps and plans of the Soviet command in just six months. Apparently, Zhukov did not understand the essence of the flexible structure of the German tank groups, uniting two or even three motorized (tank) corps under a single command, and, depending on the situation, often reinforced with infantry. This is a qualitatively completely different means of solving operational and strategic tasks than our separate mechanized corps with their unchanged and still insufficiently thought out and worked out staff. Although initially they were conceived as a powerful tool in the hands of the front commanders and the High Command for developing operational success in the offensive and/or for delivering powerful counterattacks in the defense. No one even thought to estimate the composition of the mechanized groups provided for by the theory of deep operation as a means for solving strategic tasks in the hands of the High Command, and to create in advance

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their governing bodies. Incidentally, this is yet another strong proof that the Soviet leadership did not seriously plan, at least in 1941, to attack Germany.

So it turned out that many mechanized corps, and the most complete, in accordance with the cover plan, were, in fact, subordinate to the commanders of the armies of the first echelon of the border districts. So, in the PribVO, both mechanized corps were attached to the covering armies: the 12th MK - the 8th Army, and the 3rd MK - the 11th Army. In the ZapOVO, the most powerful 6th MK was assigned to the cover area, which was the area of responsibility of the command of the 10th Army, the 11th was subordinate to the 3rd Army, and the 14th to the 4th Army. The 13th MK was intended to reinforce the troops in the cover area of the 13th Army, which was still being formed. In the hands of the commander of the ZAPOVO, Pavlov, the two most poorly equipped mechanized corps remained: the 17th and 20th, which had, respectively, a total of 63 and 94 tanks each [498]. A similar pattern was observed in KOVO. The troops directly covering the border were transferred: 5th Army - 22nd Mk, 6th Army - 4th Mk, 26th Army - 8th Mk, 12th Army - 16th Mk. The 9th, 19th, 24th and 15th mechanized corps remained in the reserve of the KOVO command. Only the last of them was equipped with tanks relatively well - by 73%, the rest had 22-44% of them.

state.

Thus, in the reserves of the districts (future fronts), as well as in the reserve [of the High Command, with rare exceptions, there were mechanized corps, which by the beginning of the war had an obviously insufficient number of tanks. This, undoubtedly, significantly limited the ability of the front commanders to really influence the course of hostilities in the event of an unfavorable development of the situation. By the way, it was the tank (in name only) regiments of these corps that had to be armed in a fire order, instead of tanks, with 76-mm and 45-mm guns in order to use them in threatened areas as anti-tank ones.

The staffing of the mechanized corps of the western border military districts by the beginning of the war with personnel and tanks is summarized in Table 6.4.

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Table 6.4

EQUIPMENT OF THE MECHANICAL CORPS OF THE WESTERN
BORDER MILITARY DISTRICTS BY THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR

| Personnel - Composition District

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Many of the mechanized corps, in which the bulk of the tanks were assembled, by the beginning of the war looked more like training formations than combat units. Their obsolete materiel was suitable only for the educational process. But clearly shown in the table is low equipped -

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The strength of most mechanized corps with people and main armament was far from their only weak point. The formations and units that were part of them were often deployed in different areas, often far from each other. It was not at all easy to quickly gather them into a fist if necessary. Sometimes the mechanized corps were literally pulled to pieces by order of the higher authorities even before the start of the war. For example, the 28th motorized regiment from the 28th TD, which is part of the 12th MK, remained in Riga, and its tank regiments, the 55th and 56th, on the night of June 19, advanced to the border, to the area Šiauliai. Because of this, the tanks of the division were 100 km from their infantry and were forced to go into battle without her support. The 1st MK was at the disposal of the LVO command, but the 1st TD from its composition was subordinated to the 14th Army on June 17 and departed from the Pskov region far to the north, to Alakurti in the Murmansk region. In the PribVVO, the 5th TD from the 3rd MK was transferred to the direct subordination of the 11th Army.

Historians are still arguing about the true reasons for such a sharp increase in the number of newly formed mechanized corps, for which there was no necessary equipment. In his memoirs, Zhukov wrote about this as follows:

"In February 1941, the General Staff developed an even broader plan for the creation of armored formations than was envisaged by government decisions in 1940.

Taking into account the number of armored troops in the German army, the people's commissar and I asked, when forming mechanized corps, to use the existing tank brigades and even cavalry formations, as the closest to the tank troops in their "maneuverable Spirit".

I.V. Stalin, apparently, at that time did not yet have a definite opinion on this issue and hesitated. Time passed, and only in March 1941 a decision was made to form the 20 mechanized corps that we requested" [500].

According to the authors, it all started with information from the Main Intelligence Directorate, according to which the Germans increased the number of their motorized corps to 8-10 [501], and the total number of tanks to 10,000 units [502]. In fact, at that time there were only about 100 tanks in the German army.

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half of this amount. Such a big exaggeration of their true number arose not by chance: in the USSR it was assumed that the Germans would adopt captured French and English tanks. In fact, they did not meet German requirements and were used in ver-

there is very little made, and even then not on the Soviet-German front, but mainly in the rear to protect important objects and fight partisans. But we know this now, but then the figures were taken as the basis for planning - 10 enemy motorized corps and 10,000 tanks. And then, by simply multiplying by 3, we came to the need to have 30 mechanized corps in the Red Army, approximately 1000 tanks in each ...

In this regard, a few words about the role of G.K. Zhukov during the described period. Of course, this is too complex and contradictory a figure to be judged by deeds, and not by the panegyrics of his enthusiastic admirers, and certainly not by his own recollections and later reflections. The authors are not inclined to overestimate the creative contribution of Georgy Konstantinovich to the theory and practice of military art. The leadership of the General Staff - the "brain" of the Red Army - was entrusted to a man whose level of education did not correspond in any way to the position of his chief. In 1906, Zhukov graduated from three classes of a parochial school, and from military education he had a four-month school for non-commissioned officers in 1916, six months of study at the 1st Ryazan cavalry courses in 1920, and one-year cavalry improvement courses command staff, completed in 1925, and 3-month advanced training courses for senior commanding staff in the winter of 1929/30.

Considering the level of knowledge and character of the commander of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade G.K. Zhukov, his direct boss, the future Marshal of the Soviet Union K.K. Rokossovsky, who then commanded the 7th Samara Cavalry Division, on November 8, 1930, wrote an attestation on him with a clear military conclusion:

'
At the beginning of May 1941, the administration of the 29th mechanized corps, which had just been created in the Far East, was disbanded. All three divisions

its composition became separate. Thus, by the beginning of the war, 29 mechanized corps remained in the Red Army.

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"It can be used to the benefit of the case as a division commander or commander of a mechanized unit, provided that you pass through the appropriate courses. He cannot be appointed to a staff or teaching job - he organically hates it" [503].

However, Zhukov was not sent to any further studies. In the decade that has passed since the end of the course, Zhukov's attitude to staff work has not changed, he still shied away from it, since he had practically no experience in this regard.

The decision on the mass formation of mechanized corps of the second

waves without an appropriate material base and trained personnel was a huge mistake that entailed the most serious consequences. In pursuit of quantity, quality has once again been neglected. In addition, units and formations that were already more or less knocked together and had, if not combat, then at least practical experience in joint operations during exercises, served as the source material for their creation. Freshly minted formations simply did not have time to acquire it and were combat units only in name.

And the structure of even those formations in which the number of tanks could be brought up to the regular strength was far from optimal. For example, a motorized rifle regiment (MSR) of a new tank division, which consisted of three rifle battalions, had only one regimental 6-gun battery. In justification of his staffing, it was said that "in comparison with a normal rifle regiment, anti-tank guns are excluded from the regiment of the proposed organization, considering that tanks will be used for this purpose, which will be attached to this regiment" [504]. It was believed that the tank itself was the best anti-tank weapon. As a result of this decision, the capabilities of the motorized rifle regiment to repel the attacks of enemy tanks were seriously weakened, while the striking power of the tank regiments of the division was also reduced.

To develop a rational organization, the Soviet tank forces needed their own long and bloody experience of a big war. Management has such experience

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There was no Red Army at that time, so the mechanized corps (of course, those that were staffed close to the state) turned out to be heavily overloaded with tanks and, at the same time, for successful operations they were severely lacking in infantry, artillery, transport, communications and repair facilities, and most importantly - qualified personnel. It was not for nothing that Vasilevsky said that we needed another year or two of peaceful development in order to solve the tasks of the military plan. Apparently, it was necessary to take a stricter approach to determining the order of creation of mechanized corps, to do it consistently. At the same time, in no case was it possible to rush to disband all tank brigades at once. However, they went the other way. As a result, by the beginning of the war, many tank and motorized divisions remained unfit for combat, as they had a minimum number of tanks and other equipment.

Meanwhile, the concentration of German troops near the western border of the country continued. And realistically thinking military men, despite the assurances of the leader that Hitler could not wage a war on two fronts, felt the imminent danger of an attack, including with the massive use of tanks. The Wehrmacht did not conduct military operations in Europe at that time. To talk seriously about a possible landing and capture of operational bridgeheads on the coast of England is

after the failure of the air war, it made no sense against her. Leaving the tank formations of the border districts in an incompetent state bordered on a crime. The head of the GABTU of the Red Army, Lieutenant General Ya.N. Fedorenko felt with his skin the inevitable approach of a big war and did not want to allow the tankers to meet her unarmed. Therefore, on May 14, 1941, he reported to the Commissar of Defense that due to the incomplete provision of mechanized corps with tanks, they "are not fully combat-ready. In order to increase their combat effectiveness until they are provided with tanks, I consider it necessary to equip the tank regiments of the mechanized corps with 76-mm and 45-mm guns and machine guns so that, if necessary, they could fight like anti-tank regiments and divisions.

For this, the GABTU had at its disposal 1200 76-mm guns, 1000 45-mm anti-tank guns and 4000 DP light machine guns, which were enough to

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to equip 50 tank regiments - 24 76-mm and 18 45-mm guns and 80 machine guns each. It was also planned to allocate 1,200 ZIS trucks and 1,500 GAZ trucks to the units for towing these guns and transporting personnel and ammunition. Ya.N. Fedorenko concerned the tank regiments of 16 mechanized corps, 11 of which were located in the border districts.

On May 15, the People's Commissar of Defense approved the list of distribution of weapons and vehicles to the districts. The very next day, the Chief of the General Staff sent directives to the respective districts on the implementation of the adopted decision to | July 1941 The event was to be "carried out in such a way as not to violate the organizational principle of the regiment as a tank unit, bearing in mind that tanks would subsequently enter service" [505]. Of course, this was a palliative decision, but it allowed at least some use of parts that were deprived of basic military equipment before it was received from industry.

Let us consider this issue in more detail using the example of ZAPOVO, in whose three mechanized corps it was planned to equip at least 11 tank regiments. The district was allocated 480 guns and 590 vehicles for their transportation, including: for the 13th mechanized corps - 102 guns (48 76-mm guns and 54 45-mm anti-tank guns), 160 light machine guns, 48 ZIS vehicles and 74 "GAS". The least equipped mechanized corps were to receive: 17th - 168 (96 76-mm guns and 72 45-mm PLPs), 320 light machine guns, 96 ZIS vehicles and 112 GAZ vehicles; 20th - 210 (120 76-mm guns and 90 45-mm anti-tank guns) 400 light machine guns, 120 ZIS and 140 GAZ vehicles? [506].

In this regard, we consider it necessary to dwell on the well-known statement of the former Chief of Staff of the 4th Army, General L.M. Sandalov about 480 152-mm guns allegedly assembled in May 1941 at the artillery range southwest

Armament and vehicles were allocated to the following mechanized corps:
in the LVO - 10th, in PribOVO - 3rd, 12th, in ZapOVO - 13th, 17th and 20th, in KOVO - 16th,
19th mu and 24th, in the OdVO - 2nd and 18th, in the Moscow Military District - 21st, in the ORVO
- 23rd, in the KhVO - 25th, in the North Caucasus Military District - 26th, in SAVO - 27th
mu.

? The 17th mechanized corps as part of the 27th and 36th tank divisions and the 209th md
was stationed in the Baranovichi area, the 20th mk as part of the 26th and 38th tank divisions and
the 210th md - in the Borisov area.

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Baranovichi for the formation of ten artillery regiments of the RGC [507]. There
is no mention of this in any of the known documents of the ZAPOVO (and the
front), as well as in the MP-1941 mobplane. The same number of barrels -
480 - for Fedorenko and Sandalov can hardly be explained by a mere
coincidence. In our opinion, it was precisely those same 480 guns that
were intended for the rearmament of tank regiments that did not have
tanks, so that if necessary they could be used as anti-tank guns. After the
decision was made to re-arm the tank regiments, deliveries of 76 and 45 mm
caliber guns to the district went at an increasing pace. So, in June alone,
ZAPOVO received 117 45 mm anti-tank guns and 110 76 mm divisional
guns mod. 1902/30. And the total number of 45-mm and 76-mm divisional guns
in the district in the second half of the year increased by 513 pieces! [509].

L.M. Sandalov could have heard about the allocation of such a number of
guns to the district, but he probably did not know the plan of the General Staff,
especially its details: to whom, how much, what caliber and what they were supplied
for, because this did not directly concern the 4th Army. At the same time,
supplies of arms to the western border districts continued from the internal districts
and from the stocks of the center, including large-caliber guns. So, only from
the Leningrad Military District in the second quarter were to be transferred to
ZapOVO 40 152-mm howitzer guns (in June, the district received 24 such guns),
20 152-mm guns of the 1910/30 model (from the beginning of the year to | 33
guns arrived on June), 24 122-mm guns (36 by | June and 12 more in June) and
24 107-mm guns (arrived by June 1, 42) [510]. But in this case, we were talking
about several dozen 152-mm guns, and their total number in the district
corresponded to the combat composition of his artillery. The incoming guns were
directed to specific regiments, on the basis of which they were to be formed according
to the deployment scheme.

All 480 guns intended for tank regiments did not make sense to collect in one place.
At the training ground southwest of Baranovichi, apparently, only guns for formations of the 17th
MK were unloaded. For the 20th MK, the guns were most likely unloaded in the area of formation
of its formations (Minsk, Osipovich, Borisov), and for the 13th MK, for the purpose of secrecy,
they were apparently transferred in small batches through Baranovichi

[508].

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new artillery pieces. They were transported to addresses by a few tractors, which was also mentioned by Sandalov [511].

Summarizing the foregoing, we can say that the combat readiness of the mechanized corps actually achieved by the beginning of the war was far from corresponding to the importance and scope of the tasks assigned to them. The very first battles revealed this to the fullest. Understaffed, undertrained and armed from the pine forest and from the pine tree, the Soviet tank units and formations had to start the hardest battles on the move, not yet being ready for them. As a result, the numerous and formidable on paper mechanized corps of the Red Army quickly melted away in the fire of border battles, failing to inflict tangible damage on the enemy.

In order to strengthen the ability to repel the massive attacks of the enemy tank forces, the leadership of the NPO, through the Defense Council, sent a letter to the technical department of the People's Commissariat of Armaments on the issue of forming 20 artillery anti-tank brigades of the RGK. The established commission recognized this proposal as timely and expedient. Initially, it was proposed that brigades should have three regiments, each with three divisions (36 four-gun batteries in total). However, due to the cessation of production of 45-mm anti-tank guns mod. 1937!, the commission proposed using 37-mm anti-tank anti-aircraft guns of the 1940 model for arming the brigades. their thread as part of anti-tank brigades with 85-mm anti-aircraft guns mod. 1939 on a four-wheel carriage, with better mobility and an armor-piercing round worked out in production.

' The decision to recognize the 45-mm anti-tank gun arr. 1937 unpromising and the termination of its gross output in 1941 was adopted by the Council

Defense under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of November 15, 1940

? According to the conclusion of the commission, the 37-mm anti-tank-anti-aircraft automatic gun had a good ability to penetrate armor with an armor-piercing projectile with a strong body, the production of which had already been mastered. This was confirmed by firing tests of existing samples of foreign and domestic tanks from it. In addition, the introduction of the RGK anti-tank brigade. such guns significantly improved its ability to repel air strikes.

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In the end, though much belatedly, a more realistic decision was made. According to the General Staff Resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR No. 1112-459ss of April 23, 1941 to June, it was allowed to form 10 anti-tank artillery brigades. The same document determined the composition and armament of the anti-tank artillery brigade, which was to consist of the command of 2 artillery regiments, a headquarters battery, a mine-sapper and motor transport battalions. The total strength of the brigade is 5322 people! [512]. The formation of anti-tank brigades of the RGK in the districts began immediately. By May 10, the 23rd and 224th rifle divisions from the Moscow Military District were supposed to arrive in the ZAPO VO, and on May 15, the 201st rifle division from the Siberian Military District. On their basis, at the expense of the materiel and personnel of the six reorganized artillery regiments of these divisions, it was planned to form three anti-tank brigades of the RGK, with an approved staff of 5309 people, over the remaining 15-20 days? [513].

Deep reorganization also affected the airborne troops. The same Decree of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of April 23 approved the formation of five airborne corps, each of which consisted of a directorate, three airborne brigades, a tank battalion, a communications aviation unit and a communications platoon with a total strength of 8020 people [514]. In pursuance of this decision, on the basis of nine rifle regiments and other units of the same disbanded divisions and within the same time frame, two airborne brigades (7th and 8th) were formed in the ZapOVO, the third - 214th - was formed even earlier, as well as the body parts of the 4th Airborne Corps. In a similar manner and at the same time in other border districts, the remaining seven anti-tank brigades (five in KOVO and two in PribOVO) and four airborne corps (two in KOVO and one each in PribOVO and OdVO) were formed. More

Armament of the brigade (according to the state): 76-mm guns of the 1936 model - 48; 85 mm anti-aircraft guns - 48; 107 mm M-60 - 24; 37-mm anti-aircraft guns - 16, large-caliber machine guns - 12, light machine guns - 93, vehicles - 718 (including cars - 11, trucks - 584, special - 123) and 165 tractors.

» Half of the required 144 76-mm cannons in the ZapOVO were covered by three light artillery regiments of the disbanded divisions.

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one 202nd separate mobile airborne brigade was left in the Far East. In total, the administrations and units of eleven rifle divisions that arrived from the depths of the country [515] were directed to the formation of 10 anti-tank artillery brigades of the RGC and five airborne corps.

Thus, during the last months of peace, the Soviet Union and its army were feverishly preparing for war. At the same time, it was no longer about a far-fetched war at the same time

but with the whole world, which was constantly expected in the thirties. This time the enemy was determined quite precisely. It was a very dangerous enemy - the Wehrmacht, which in fact repeatedly proved its strength. In addition, all the enemies of Germany in continental Europe were already destroyed, and no one could help the USSR in the war on land. At the same time, after the participation of the Red Army in armed conflicts and in the war with Finland, the Soviet leadership had much less illusions about its own superiority. Therefore, in 1941, Stalin thought only of one thing: how to delay the start of the war at least until next year in order to give the Red Army the opportunity to complete the re-equipment with new equipment and bring its combat readiness to an acceptable level. But, alas, there was no time left for this ...

PLANS TO COVER THE STATE BORDER

In terms of strategic deployment, special attention was paid to the organization of the operational cover of the state border, which included a whole range of measures to ensure the mobilization, deployment and concentration of the main forces of the Red Army. This task was entrusted to the armies of the first operational echelon of the border districts. The command of each of the special military districts solved this problem according to its own understanding, the general principles of organizing the cover of the new state border were not developed. In the already mentioned act of acceptance and delivery of the People's Commissariat of Defense, it was noted in this regard that "the enshtab has no data on the state of covering the borders. The decisions of the Military Councils of the districts, armies and the front on this issue are unknown to the General Staff" [516].

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In connection with the growing threat of war with Germany, since February 1941, the General Staff took measures to adjust the district cover plans. Thus, according to the April directive of the General Staff on the development of a plan for the operational deployment of the ZapOVO armies, it was written:

"<...> G. Cover for mobilization, concentration and deployment of front troops.

1. Taking into account the possibility of the enemy going on the offensive before the end of our concentration, to organize the cover of the border at the front of all armies according to the type of strong, gradually strengthening as the troops arrive, defense (highlighted by us. - Auth.) with the full use of fortified areas and field fortifications, with their all-round development during the period of concentration" [517].

The idea of the High Command was that the troops of the first strategic echelon (the armies

cover and reserves of the border districts) to repel the enemy's first strike, ensure the mobilization, concentration and deployment of the main forces of the Red Army and thereby create favorable conditions for delivering a retaliatory strike.

The plan for the defense of the state border was developed by the General Staff in May 1941. The development of cover plans was carried out on the basis of the directives of the People's Commissar of Defense, which were sent to the ZapOVO and KOVO on May 5, and to the OdVO on May 6. av LVO and PribOVO May 14, 1941 [518]. But in connection with the ongoing reorganization, the headquarters of the districts did not have time to develop documents of high quality, their projects became outdated even before they were approved. The cover plans for the Western and Kiev Special Military Districts underwent the most significant changes. So, on May 14, the commander of the 3rd Army was ordered, in connection with the redeployment of units that had taken place, on the basis of the directive of the NPO of the USSR No. 503859 / ss / ovk on May 20, 1941, to develop a new plan for covering the state border. As subsequent events showed, the deadlines set proved to be unrealistic. The latest directives for the development of district cover plans were sent by the commander of the troops under

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border military districts even later than 14 May. According to them, by May 20-30, the districts were to develop their specific plans for defense and covering the state border in order to:

"[. To prevent the invasion of both ground and air enemy into the territory of the district.

2. By stubborn defense of the fortifications along the line of the state border, firmly cover the mobilization, concentration and deployment of district troops.

3. Air defense and aviation operations are both

ensure the normal operation of the railways and the concentration of troops" [519].

In accordance with the requirements of the directives, the basis of defense according to the cover plans consisted of fortified areas and field fortifications, which were built along the new state border. In order to cover the mobilization, concentration and deployment of district troops, the territory of each of them was divided into several army cover areas (RP) of the state border. For example, for the POVO, whose troops were in the direction of the main attack of the Wehrmacht, four areas of cover were identified: No. 1 - Grodno, 3rd Army; No. 2 - Bialystok, 10th Army; No. 3 - Belsky, 13th Army; No. 4 - Brest, 4th Army. Neighbors were indicated, their tasks and demarcation lines with

them. Each army of the first echelon of the district included a mechanized corps. In addition, two more mechanized corps remained in reserve at the disposal of the district commander. In many ways, the plans were designed for the future. Thus, the 13th Army was assigned cover area No. 3 when its directorate had not yet been fully formed, as it was planned to do this by reducing the staff of the NPO directorates and the headquarters of the ZapOVO.

Directive of the General Staff No. 503862 / OV of May 20 also defined four cover areas for the troops of the KOVO:

The decision to form the administration of the 13th Army and the army communications battalion (with deployment in Mogilev) was made only on April 23, 1941. Their number in peacetime was established: the administration of the army - 237 military personnel and 98 civilians, the communications battalion - 508 military personnel .

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1st - 5th Army, 2nd - 6th Army, 3rd - 26th Army and 4th - 12th Army [520]. Army cover areas, in turn, were divided into corps sections and subsections for divisions, depending on specific conditions [521]. The cover plan for the formations and units indicated the areas of deployment, the timing of the exit to the areas of operational designation, combat missions, the procedure for interaction with the border units, units and subunits of the URs.

Contrary to the opinion of military experts, the positions of the formations of the covering armies, reinforced by field fortifications, and even the long-term firing structures of the fortified areas were advanced to the very border. Therefore, the construction of defense in the areas and areas of cover did not provide for the creation of a support zone (foreground) of sufficient depth. The desire to cover the state border along its entire length led to the fact that the limited forces of the covering armies were stretched along the border "in a string". The defense formations of the first echelon of the covering armies had to be built on an unreasonably wide front.

The distribution of the forces of the Red Army on the eve of the war, their echeloning and average operational densities are shown in Table 6.5.

The low operational density of troops in the areas (belts) of cover, the unavailability of fortified areas and field fortifications did not provide a stable defense. To break through it, it was enough for the enemy to concentrate not so large forces in the chosen directions. Obviously, it was more advantageous to carry the main line of defense in depth, tying it, if possible, to natural obstacles. By reducing the width of cover zones and formation areas, it was possible to slightly increase the tactical density of troops.

In the event of a breakthrough of large enemy forces in depth

defense, their defeat was planned to be carried out by counterattacks of the reserves of the district as part of mechanized and rifle corps with the support of aviation. However, the mechanized corps intended for counterattacks were not, with rare exceptions, fully equipped and, consequently, were only partially combat-ready. Thus, the front commanders did not have sufficient funds to decisively influence the development of the situation.

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Table 6.5

COMPOSITION AND SEPARATION FORCES OF THE RKKA
ON THE EVE OF THE WAR, OPERATIONAL
DENSITY IN COVERAGE STRIPS

Equiv
division"

[2nd echelon] _

total
reserves

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Total "pov s[6 Pop [\$ [317 8]

Sources: [522].

Notes:

- ° including two motorized rifle and 19 mountain rifle divisions;
- `* including four mountain cavalry divisions; when calculating the number of equivalent divisions, one airborne corps was equated to a division, and one brigade to half a division.

Operator

density

Apparently, therefore, the districts were ordered to prepare rear defensive lines, and in case of a forced withdrawal, to develop a plan for creating anti-tank barriers to the full depth and a plan for mining important objects. So, the commander of the KOVO troops was ordered:

"Reconnoiter and prepare rear defensive lines for the entire depth of defense up to the river. Dnieper inclusive.

Develop a plan for bringing the Korostensky, Novgorod-Volynsky, Letichevsky and Kyiv fortified regions into combat readiness, as well as all fortified areas built in 1939.

In case of a forced withdrawal (highlighted by us. - Auth.), develop a plan for creating anti-tank barriers to the full depth and a plan for mining bridges, zhel. dor. nodes and points of possible concentration of the enemy (troops, headquarters, hospitals, etc. "[523].

But the commanders of the frontier districts had neither the strength nor the time to fulfill this part of the cover plan: everything was thrown at the completion of the construction of fortified areas on the new border and field fortifications. Yes, they would not be understood if they diverted at least part of their forces from the main task.

The cover plan could be put into effect upon receipt of an encrypted telegram signed by the People's Commissar of Defense, a member of the Main Military Council and the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army with the following content:

"START TO IMPLEMENT COVER PLAN
TIA 1941.

The cipher telegram of the Military Council of the District on the commissioning of the cover plan had the following content (for the ZapOVO):

"To the commander of the (3rd, 4th, 10th, 13th) army. I declare an alarm (Grodno, Bialystok, Belsk, Kobrin) in 1941. Signatures.

Army commanders, in turn, indicated the following conventional texts of cipher telegrams (codograms) for formations and parts of the cover area:

"To the commander of the corps (division) number. I declare an alarm with the opening of the "red" package. Signatures.

The adopted system of multistage transmission of ciphered telegrams (each signed by the commander, member of the Military Council and chief of staff) took a lot of time, including deciphering the text. This did not take into account the possibility of the enemy putting out of action wire communications and some command and control units even before the start of hostilities. In this case, a quick, clear and reliable procedure for notifying connections directly from the center was not thought out. The issues of reliable and quick notification of headquarters and troops were never resolved, and this was part of the direct duties of the Chief of the General Staff.

The documents of the "red packets" determined the order of actions of formations and units to cover the border. They described in detail the alarm actions of all units and subunits and indicated: who can raise units on alarm, the combat composition of formations and units in which they should go to their own areas, the time for readiness of units for action and the occupation of defense areas, etc. P. The time standards for the implementation of the plans were set separately for summer and winter. They were repeatedly tested during training alarms. The actions of the troops were practiced with command personnel, as well as with units and subunits, advancing along designated routes (with timing), not approaching the border closer than five kilometers.

The rise of parts of the districts on combat alert had the right to carry out:

- a) People's Commissar of Defense;
- 6) Military council of the district;
- c) military councils of armies;
- d) persons who have prescriptions signed only by the people's commissar of defense or the Military Council of the district.

'
It is unlikely that there was a variant of raising troops from the center by radio. Constant watch in radio networks and radio directions could reveal to the enemy the location and composition of formations (associations).

? The red packets got their name because the documents were stored in thick, printed, red folders. According to the instructions, they were kept by the chiefs of staff of formations and associations in a personal safe, along with a mobplane and a deployment scheme.

When developing cover plans, the option was taken as the basis in which the formations (units) of the covering armies would be able to occupy long-term and field fortifications.

BEFORE the start of hostilities (during the threatened period), which will allow them to join the battle in an organized manner. It was believed that both sides would start hostilities with only a part of their forces, and that the covering armies, which had a sufficient number of forces and means, would be able, having repelled the first blow of the enemy, to successfully complete the task assigned to them.

The possibility of a sudden transition to the offensive of large enemy forces was not seriously considered. It is completely incomprehensible why the circumstances of the German attack on Poland, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway, Greece, Yugoslavia, where Hitler unceremoniously violated interstate treaties, were not taken into account. And everywhere the scenario of hostilities was the same: a sudden attack by the Luftwaffe on airfields with the aim of destroying enemy aircraft on the ground and seizing air supremacy, the invasion of strike groups and the rapid development of an offensive in depth with massive air support in order to encircle and defeating the main enemy forces. This was a rude and inexplicable account of the leadership of the country and the Red Army. A miscalculation is putting it mildly, given its tragic consequences.

Another shortcoming of the cover plan was that putting it into action meant not only raising troops on alert and withdrawing them to the planned lines (to the areas of concentration), but also mobilizing them on the territory of the districts. Up to 15 days were allotted by the plan for the full deployment of troops near the border districts in the cover zones. No option was envisaged in which it would be necessary for the troops to occupy the cover zone without mobilization, for example, to suppress possible provocations from the Germans. Taking into account the serious danger of a sudden attack by the Germans, some commanders and commanders of formations, at their own peril and risk, took (or tried to take) measures to prepare for its reflection. However, such attempts were resolutely suppressed "from above": everyone was under the strictest order not to "provoke" the Germans in any case.

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As a clear example of the prohibition of the slightest manifestation of initiative and independence in the troops in the face of an inevitably growing threat, is the order of the Chief of the General Staff to the commander of the KOVO troops Kirponos, given on June 10, 1941:

"The head of the border troops of the NKVD of the Ukrainian SSR reported that the heads of the fortified areas were instructed to occupy the foreground.

Report to the People's Commissar of Defense on what basis parts of the fortified areas of the KOVO were ordered to occupy the foreground. Such actions can immediately provoke the Germans into an armed clash and are fraught with all sorts of consequences. Such an order immediately

cancel and report who specifically gave such an unauthorized order.

Zhukov" [524].

The next day, he sent another telegram to the same addressee:

"1. The forefield zone should not be occupied by field and ur units without a special order. Organize the protection of structures by sentries and patrols.

2. The orders given by you on the occupation of the foreground by Urov units should be canceled immediately. Execution check and report to June 16, 1941.

Zhukov" [525].

In May, the development of cover plans in the districts was completed, and in the period from June 5 to June 20 they were submitted to the [General Staff for approval. But they did not have time to approve them before the start of the war.

Thus, in terms of composition and operational formation, mobilization and combat readiness of formations and units, the covering armies were essentially unable to fulfill the assigned task of providing cover from the mobilization, concentration and deployment of the main forces of the fronts in the event of a surprise attack by the enemy. Moreover, they were not able to repel the massive blows of his large forces.

Chapter 7

WEHRMAHT AND THE RED ARMY ON THE EVE OF THE WAR

THE MAIN BATTLE COMPOSITION OF THE WEHRMACHTS AND THE RKKA BY THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR

To attack the USSR, Hitler decided to invest maximum forces and means in the first strike. To do this, he gathered an army that surpassed in its power everything that the history of wars had previously known. It included 151 German divisions, including 19 tank and 13 motorized, as well as two brigades and one separate motorized regiment. The number of this grouping was 4050 thousand people. The combat and strength of the Wehrmacht in Operation Barbarossa by the beginning of the war is indicated in more detail in Appendix 2. Taking into account 15 Romanian and 16 Finnish divisions, as well as 8 Romanian, 6 Hungarian and 3 Finnish brigades, the composition of the invasion army corresponded to 192 equivalent divisions (combat and the numerical composition of the armies of Germany's allies in the initial period of the war with the USSR is shown in Appendix 3).

The composition and grouping of the ground forces of Germany and its Yuznikov:

1. Troops in Finland consisting of:

- German army "Norway": mountain corps "Norway" (mountain divisions - 2); 36th ak (pd - 1, mountain brigade - 1); 3rd Finnish ak (pd - 2);

- Finnish army: on the Karelian Isthmus (pd - 7); in Karelia (pd - 5, cavalry brigade - 1, jaeger brigades - 2); in the area of Lieksa (front - 1), near Hanko (front - 1).

- reserve (German pd - 1).

In total, Finland has 20 divisions and 4 brigades. To support them, 2 separate German tank battalions were allocated.

2. GA "North" (commander - Field Marshal von Leeb) consisting of:

- 4th TG (td - 3, md - 3, pd - 2), collection area - south and east of Tilsit;

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- 18th A (pd - 8, security division - 1), collection area - north of Tilsit;

- 16th A (pd - 10, security divisions - 2), collection area - east of Insterburg;

- reserve (pd - 1).

In total - 30 divisions (TD - 3, md - 3, pd - 21, security divisions - 3).

3. GA "Center" (commander - Field Marshal von Bock)

composed of:

- 3rd TG (TD - 4, MD - 3), collection area - north and east of Suwalki;

- 9th A (pd - 12, security division - 1), collection area - southeast and southwest of Suwalki;

- 2nd Sh (td - 5, md - 3, cd - 1, separate motorized regiment - 1), collection area - southeast of Warsaw;

- 4th A (pd - 18, security divisions - 2), collection area - northeast and east of Warsaw;

- reserve (pd - 1).

Total - 50 divisions (td - 9, md - 6, cd - 1, pd - 31, security divisions - 3) and 1 motorized regiment to break through the Soviet

fortified areas, the group was given 2 separate battalions of fire throw tanks.

4. GA "South" (commander - Field Marshal von Rundstedt) consisting of:

- 1st TG (td - 5, md - 3, pd - 1, motorized brigade yes - 1), collection area - southeast of Lublin;
- 6th A (pd - 10, security division - 1), collection area - southeast of Lublin;
- 17th A (pd - 7, mountain or chasseurs - 4, security divisions - 2), collection area - west of Yaroslav;
- 11th A (German infantry division - 7, Romanian infantry division - I, Romanian infantry division - 14, Romanian brigades - 8), collection area - east and southeast of Botosani;
- reserve (pd - 1, mountain or chasseur divisions - 2).

In total - 43 German divisions (td - 5, md - 3, pd - 26, mountain or chasseur divisions - 6, security divisions - 3) and I motorized brigade, as well as 15 Romanian divisions (td - I, pd - 14) and 8 brigades. To break through the Soviet fortified areas, the group was assigned one separate battalion of flamethrower tanks. From the beginning of the operation, it was successively reinforced by Italian, Hungarian and Slovak units.

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5. Reserves of the main command:

Transferred with the appointment: for the GA "North" (pd - 2); for GA "Center" (pd - 6); for GA "South" (pd - 4).

Were in the process of preparation or transfer without a specific destination: td - 2, md - 1, pd - 9.

In total, 24 divisions were included in the reserves of the main command (td - 2, md - 1, pd - 21) [526].

The most powerful in its composition was the GA "Center", on the flanks of which two tank groups operated. In the enemy grouping, one can clearly see the desire to mass the forces and means on the axes of the main attacks of the army groups. Large forces were concentrated there on relatively narrow sectors of the front, which made it possible to drive powerful, deeply echeloned armored wedges into the defense of the Soviet troops. This was done by significantly weakening the areas of the Carpathians and the Bialystok salient, where the front was held only by weak military outposts. The strongest in terms of composition were the 6th, 4th and 9th armies, in the offensive zones of which tank groups operated (about them and comparing the tank parks of Germany and the USSR below).

The composition and grouping of the ground forces of the Soviet Union. Under the ever-increasing threat of war, the Soviet government took serious measures to strengthen the Red Army. Thus, from January 1, 1939, until the moment of the German attack, the number of personnel rose from 2,485,000 to 5,434,729 people, or by 119%. Accordingly, the number of military equipment has also increased. Thus, the number of guns and mortars increased from 55.8 thousand to 117,581, or by 111%, and tankettes and tankettes - from 21,100 to 25,482, or by 21% [527].

The German command sought by all means to obtain the most complete and reliable information about the forces of the Red Army opposing them. There was no particular hope for an agent network due to the active work of the Soviet counterintelligence. Valuable information was obtained as a result of long-range high-altitude reconnaissance flights into the depths of Soviet territory and radio reconnaissance. Testimony of defectors and reports of agents from Turkey, Finland and other countries were also used to collect information. Table 7.1 shows the composition and grouping of the Red Army ground forces in comparison with their German assessment

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as of June 20, 1941 (for details, the real combat and numerical strength of the active army of the USSR is shown in Appendix 4).

It is easy to see that the German intelligence officers were able to quite accurately determine the number of Soviet formations only in the border areas. The composition of the Far Eastern grouping was undoubtedly helped by their allies, the Japanese, to clarify. At the same time, German intelligence made significant mistakes in determining the true structure of the Soviet troops. The Germans exaggerated by more than a quarter the number of Soviet rifle divisions in the western districts and by more than 2.5 times the actual number of Soviet cavalry. The fact is that many cavalry divisions, along with all tank brigades and some rifle divisions, were reorganized into tank and motorized formations of mechanized corps. These qualitative changes in the composition of the Red Army were not discovered in time by the intelligence of the

mast.

German Air Force in the East. Air support for Army Groups "North", "Center" and "South" was provided, respectively, by the 1st, 2nd and 4th air fleets. The most powerful of them, as expected, was the 2nd VF, while the 1st VF included only one air corps. The Luftwaffe forces assembled to participate in Operation Barossa consisted of 3,275 combat aircraft, of which 2,549 were serviceable at the start of the war, and a total of 3,914 aircraft (3,032 serviceable) [529]. Details of the composition of the Luftwaffe as of June 22, 1941 are presented in Appendix 5.

The Soviet Air Force on the eve of the war, in comparison with other types of armed forces, developed at a faster pace: from January 1, 1939, until the German attack, the number of combat aircraft increased from 7.7 thousand to 18,759, or by 144% [530]. German intelligence clearly underestimated their quantitative and qualitative composition. This can be seen from Table 7.2:

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Table 7.2

THE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT IN THE SOVIET AIR FORCE COMPARED TO THE GERMAN ESTIMATE

Rodya Air Force in the West

Source: [531].

Note: the numerator is the actual number; in the denominator - according to the German estimate.

But the Germans miscalculated even more in estimating the total strength of the Soviet Air Force, setting it at 8,000 aircraft. In fact, in service with Soviet aviation on | | June 1941, taking into account the Air Force of the fleet, there were 18,759 combat aircraft. The significant discrepancy between the German data on the number of Soviet attack aircraft in the West and the real ones is explained by the fact that a significant part of the fighters of the old types of the Red Army Air Force was actually used as attack aircraft. Detailed information on the strength of the Soviet Air Force as of June 1, 1941 is in Appendixes 6 and 7. It clearly demonstrates that the main problem of Soviet aviation on the eve of the war was by no means a lack of combat aircraft. There were quite enough planes, but for many of them there were no trained crews. This was especially true for new types of aircraft in the western military districts; less than half were provided with trained crews.

In total, on June 20, 1941, the Germans concentrated 3,454,000 soldiers and officers on the Soviet borders as part of the ground forces, and not 4.6 million people, as is commonly believed in Soviet historiography [532]. The fact is that in the Air Force, Air Defense and the Navy should be taken into account (as well as on our side)

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only combat assets, not personnel. The invasion force consisted of 37,099 guns and mortars. Among them were 4760 light and 2252 heavy field guns, 104 88-mm anti-aircraft guns of army subordination and 30 guns of special power [533]. The rest of the German artillery was represented mainly by light infantry, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns. 625 thousand horses and 600 thousand cars, including reconnaissance armored vehicles, served as vehicles [534].

A long period of continuous success played a cruel joke on the Germans: they imagined themselves invincible. Hitler did not doubt his next triumph. Meanwhile, in the Wehrmacht grouping in the east, a shortage of reserves, both operational and strategic, is clearly visible. So, in the GA "Center" and "North" there was only one reserve division each. The OKH had no other choice: if the composition of the strategic reserves were reduced, the high command would not be able to respond in a timely manner to changes in the situation and actively influence the situation.

Initially, the reserves were clearly not enough for a successful offensive in a strip more than one and a half thousand kilometers wide. Meanwhile, as the Wehrmacht advanced into the depths of the Soviet Union, the offensive front, which was constantly expanding due to purely geographical factors, aggravated the already difficult situation with a shortage of Wehrmacht forces. Even in the event of a complete success of the offensive on the line of the main attack and a successful advance towards Moscow, the flanks of Army Group Center were hanging in the air and became more and more vulnerable as they stretched. Under such conditions, it became impossible to maintain acceptable densities of forces and means in the main directions of strikes. And for the successful conduct of subsequent operations, the reserves were all the more insufficient. With the expected level of losses, replenishments to compensate for them at the expense of trained personnel in spare parts, according to calculations, were enough for the period only until October. Things were especially tense with the reserve of officers: there were only 300 of them [535].

The grossest mistake of the Germans, which cost them dearly in the campaign of 1941, was an incorrect estimate of the number

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Soviet troops in the internal military districts. Therefore, the Germans hoped that it was only necessary to defeat the forces of the Red Army opposing them near the border, and the desired victory would be in their pocket. But, on the other hand, such hopes were the only thing they had left. After all, no one knew how to conquer or force to capitulate a huge country with almost inexhaustible human and material resources and with a leadership that had an unbending will to resist. Germany simply did not have the strength for its complete occupation. For this reason, the most optimistic result of the blitzkrieg was the Wehrmacht's entry into the Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan line. From there, the Germans planned to suppress the Soviet economic base in the Urals with the help of aircraft or an expeditionary force formed from a small number of mobile formations. But such a variant was possible only under the conditions of the complete collapse of the USSR and its army. To think about what would happen if the organized resistance of the Russians continued even after the fall of Moscow, Hitler and his entourage simply did not want to. The bet was frankly made only on the success of the blitzkrieg,

there were essentially no fallback options. This was the most serious flaw in the German strategy and an indicator of its undoubted adventurism. Thus, the planning of Operation Barbarossa, for all its care and forethought, was built on the wrong initial conditions. The most important of them—information about the enemy—far from corresponded to reality.

The composition of the tank troops of the Wehrmacht. In the upcoming war, the Germans placed their main stake on their mobile troops, and above all on tank formations. On 1 June 1941, the Wehrmacht had a total of 5162 tanks of German and Czech production. Including: 877 R2.L, 1074 R7.P, 170 R7.35(t), 754 R7.38(t), 350 R2.Sh with 37mm gun, 1090 R2.Sh with 50mm gun, 517 Pz.Bf. and 330 command tanks [536]. At that time, the Wehrmacht had 20 tank divisions (with numbers from 1st to 20th) and one 5th light division. By

the last in its composition differed little from the tank ones and soon - 1 August 1941 - was reorganized into the 21st TD [537]. Since the spring of 1941, the 5th light and 15th tank divisions

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R7.P A1E.E

fought against the British as part of Rommel's African Corps. The remaining 19 tank divisions were used in Operation Barbarossa. 17 of them entered the first echelon of the invasion troops, and two more (2nd and 5th TD) remained in the OKH reserve. It is generally believed that they were armed with about 350 tanks. This figure first appeared in the Müller-Hillebrand reference book [538]. However, Müller Hillebrand wrote his major work more than half a century ago. Since then, information about the Wehrmacht and its tank forces has been significantly expanded and refined thanks to the work of later researchers, especially Thomas Jentz.

In fact, the 2nd and 5th Panzer Divisions were left in the rear due to the failure of almost their entire tank fleet during the campaign in the Balkans. Combat losses in Greece and Yugoslavia were small. So, the 2nd TD, which had 142 tanks in its composition, irretrievably lost 15 of them, and only five were destroyed by enemy fire. The 5th TD lost 13 tanks out of 121, of which only four were in combat. The rest drowned in raging rivers while trying to ford or fell off a cliff on narrow and winding mountain roads. These two panzer divisions were involved in the campaign longer than the others. They pursued the retreat

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R7.38(0. AczG.A Czech-made

British troops were moving all the way to the south of Greece and finished fighting at the end of April. Intense operations in difficult terrain have led to severe wear and tear of the material part. As a result, by June 21, 1941, the 31st tank regiment of the 5th TD had only 23 tanks, the rest were being repaired. The 2nd TD suffered even more. Most of its personnel on wheeled vehicles under their own power made a march from Greece to Yugoslavia, and from there went by rail to Germany. [The tracked vehicles, including tanks, were sent to Italy by sea on two transport ships, MagFigo and Ku.

On May 21, 1941, they were blown up by a minefield just laid by the British in the Ionian Sea and sank to the bottom along with all their valuable cargo [539]. As a result of all these upheavals, the 2nd and 5th Panzer Divisions fully restored their combat effectiveness and were transferred to the Eastern Front only in September 1941.

Until now, historians cannot come to a consensus about how many tanks Hitler threw against the USSR. These

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One of the tank companies of this regiment took part in the landing on Crete at the end of May 1941 and was left there to support the local garrison.

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ÿ7.35((().ÿÿÿ\$ÿÿ Czech-made

contradictions often have objective reasons. The fact is that there are discrepancies regarding the staffing of German units and units, moreover, some researchers do not take into account command and special combat vehicles. There is a lack of credible data on the number of tanks in service with Germany's allies. There are ambiguities about the use of captured military equipment by the Germans. In many cases, they forget about the fighting vehicles of the five separate tank battalions of the Wehrmacht, but there were quite a few of them - 309 units. It is high time to come to a common denominator and finally decide how many tanks were thrown into battles on the German-Soviet front starting from June 22, 1941. We will try to contribute to this difficult question using the most reliable research results of recent years.

Discrepancies in the total number of combat vehicles in the Wehrmacht are most often associated with light tanks P7., which

rye by that time were obsolete and did not have weight reserves for modernization. For the most part, they were withdrawn from the first line, and only the recently formed 12th, 19th and 20th Panzer Divisions, due to a lack of better tanks, had a total of 126 P7 in their tank regiments.

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P7.[U AzeE.E

A total of 26 more such tanks were in service with the tank regiments of the 9th, 12th and 18th tank divisions. The remaining 185 of these tanks of this type, which took part in the war on the Eastern Front, were in service with companies, which were included one by one in the engineer battalions of each of the German tank divisions. At the same time, all such tanks, except for the vehicles of company commanders, were equipped with a device at the stern for transporting and dropping explosive charges weighing up to 50 kilograms. They were used to destroy obstacles and barriers on the battlefield, so it was possible to drop the charge to the right place from inside the tank. Some researchers do not classify them as battle tanks on the grounds that they were not part of tank regiments, and consider them to be specialized engineering vehicles. From our point of view, this is not true, because the installation of the above described device on P22 had little effect on its combat qualities. And they played their role during the hostilities.

It should also be taken into account that the German tank regiments had a different composition. Most often, this was due to the desire to equalize the forces of divisions equipped with tanks of German and Czech production. Czech light tanks were inferior in power to German medium ones, so everyone

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the divisions they wielded (6th, 7th, 8th, 12th, 19th and 20th TD) each had three tank battalions. The 17th and 18th tank divisions received a third tank battalion, apparently because their tank regiments had obsolete units. At the same time, the 9th TD with exactly the same "ones" for some reason had to be satisfied

be supported by only two tank battalions. But the 3rd TD was given an additional tank battalion for who knows what merit. But this is not all the discrepancies with the general logic: in the 4th, 7th and 10th tank divisions, for some reason, the tank battalions were 4-company, while all the rest were 3-company.

The number of tanks in the divisions of the German tank regiment according to the state from | February 1941 is shown in Table 7.3.

If we take into account 11 full-time "units" in the divisional engineer battalion, then a division with a 2-battalion tank

the regiment was to be armed with 173 tanks, and with the 3-battalion - 250 tanks. However, not a single German tank division was then equipped with military equipment according to the staffing table. An undoubted imprint on the real state of affairs was put off by the history of the development of each specific compound and the traditions that had developed by that time. But the main reason was the lack of modern tanks, and above all R? 7. [U. Because of this, most of the German tank battalions at that time did not have a 3rd tank platoon in the medium tank companies. In HQ R?7. [U usually didn't either. Thus, the battalion, as a rule, had 10 tanks instead of the 15 assigned to it by the state.

In total, the Germans from the Wehrmacht used 3811 tanks against the USSR. Detailed combat and strength of the tank units and formations of the Wehrmacht in the operation "Barba Rossa" is shown in Appendix 8.

They did not have tanks for direct infantry support at all, but to fulfill their role in Germany they created a fundamentally new means of combat - self-propelled assault guns. Their ancestor was Colonel Manstein, the future field marshal. In 1935, he proposed introducing into each infantry division a division of armored self-propelled guns, intended

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Table 7.3

NUMBER OF TANKS IN THE GERMAN TANK REGIMENT BY PAYMENT FROM 02/01/1941

Headquarters tank unit

Headquarters light tank.

companies

Light tank. platoon 3 tank
 platoons Total in the
 company

Headquarters of a medium
 tank company

Light tank platoon

[77] 30] 6 [162 [Total
in the 3-battalion regiment | 71 | 115 | 48 | 8 |239

Source: [540].

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Xia

tank battalion

vay company

Medium tanko

chennyh for direct support of the infantry. He himself came up with their name - "assault guns". It appeared out of nowhere. Full armor of considerable thickness for that time and a low silhouette made them hard to hit on the battlefield and allowed them to operate successfully in the forward attack echelon. Essentially, German assault guns were turretless tanks, not just cannons on self-propelled mounts. Due to the absence of a rotating turret, they, of course, did not have such rapid fire maneuvering capabilities as

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tanks, but they were in no way inferior to them in mobility and security and were cheaper.

On | June 1941, the Wehrmacht had 377 assault guns [541]. They were in service with separate divisions and batteries, which could be included in the staff of formations, or were attached to troops operating on the main

directions. In operation "Barbarossa" took part 290 assault guns, brought together in 11 divisions and 10 separate batteries, three of which belonged to the SS troops [542]. Here, too, there are often discrepancies. For example, M. Meltyukhov, having accurately calculated the number of formations of German assault artillery, gives a slightly different figure for the total number of their combat vehicles - 258 pieces [543]. The reason for this unfortunate mistake of the well-known historian is simple and understandable: he believed that the state of the German battery then had six assault guns, and in the division, respectively, - 18. Meanwhile, on April 18, 1941, the transition from 6-gun battery to a 7-gun battery, and by the beginning of the war with the USSR, most of its units managed to move to new states [545].

Meltyukhov also classifies 156 German 47-mm self-propelled guns as tanks and assault guns, but these guns were used only as anti-tank guns. In addition, they were protected only by light bulletproof armor and had an open cabin. The same applies to the 24 150-mm self-propelled guns that the Germans had, which performed the functions of fire support for the troops [546]. The technical characteristics of both machines, and in the first place - weak security, nor the scope of their tactical application do not allow them to be classified as assault guns.

Meltyukhov sometimes resorts to counting the number of German soldiers and their weapons, based not on real data, but on their regular strength [544]. Therefore, his data must be treated with caution, because the example of the German tank divisions can be clearly seen that their actual structure often differed significantly from the regular one. But Meltyukhov can be understood: detailed and reliable information, say, on the number of Wehrmacht artillery, especially on anti-tank, anti-aircraft and infantry guns, still simply does not exist. This vast topic is still waiting for its researcher. German tank troops, aviation and navy received much more attention from historians.

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Assault gun Zshr.P.Ai\$E.0

Tank units of Germany's allies also took part in Operation Barbarossa. They included 533 tanks and tankettes. Including:

- in the army of Romania: 35 V-1 tankettes, 126 V-2 light tanks and 75 K-35 light tanks, and a total of 236 pieces [547];

- the Hungarian army: 60 tankettes SU G..3 and 81 light tanks "Toldi", and a total of 141 pieces [548];

- in the Finnish army: 27 Vickers light tanks 6 captured Soviet tanks: 29 light amphibious tanks

T-Z7A, 13 light amphibious tanks T-38 and T-38M-2, 10 light tanks T-26 mod. 1931, 20 light tanks T-26 mod. 1933, four light tanks T-26 mod. 1937 and 1939, four OT-130 light flamethrower tanks and two T-28 medium tanks, for a total of 109 pieces [549];

- the armies of Slovakia: 30 light tanks GTU27.35, 10 light tanks G.T U27.38 and 7 light tanks GT U2.40, for a total of 47 pieces [550].

Thus, in total, 4634 tanks, tankettes and assault guns of Germany and its satellites participated in the attack on the USSR.
lit.

Trophy armored vehicles. During the victorious wars in 1939-1940. The Germans managed to capture huge trophies, including THOUSANDS of combat vehicles. But only a very small part of them went into the armament of the Wehrmacht. The question of the use of captured armor and cars by the Germans

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technique deserves a separate detailed consideration. The fact is that on this topic, taking advantage of the lack of reliable information, some unscrupulous amateurs, and sometimes even professional historians, often try to speculate.

Even in our time, there are people who are trying to challenge the huge numerical superiority of the Red Army over the Wehrmacht in tanks at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. For example, in one of the articles! this is done on the basis of information from the pre-war report of the head of [-RU, General Golikov. According to them, the Germans had 12 thousand tanks. It also states, referring to some vague "other estimates", including some unnamed "foreign experts", that "the total number of tanks available in Europe with Hitler, taking into account the captured trophies, was 16,000". The goal of such fabrications is the same: to justify the defeats of the Red Army by the imaginary superiority of the Germans in the quantity and quality of tanks. This position, unfortunately, was supported by the central body of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, the newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda. She took as many as three pages for such little literate writing. The article, in particular, states that about 400 French B tanks captured by the Germans were used on the Eastern Front. Meanwhile, only 35 of them were built. Even together with B1Y\$, which were produced by 342, their total number did not reach 400. In fact, the Germans repaired and adopted about 160 tanks of this type, of which only 30 got to the Eastern Front in 1941, and even then not for long [551]. We will not waste time on exposing other similar fabrications published in the article regarding the quantity and quality of German and Soviet tanks.

Many domestic historians and researchers in their

scientific works on the history of the Great Patriotic War, due to the limited source base, it is often forced

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An article in the Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper dated April 5-9, 2006 "Tanks of the Red Army: myths and realities.

? A detailed analysis of this article is contained in the work of Kavalerchik B.K. "How not to fight myths", published in the journal "Military Historical Archive" No. 9/2006, p. 65-77.

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Deny to operate with outdated information. This primarily concerns the real quantitative and qualitative composition of the Wehrmacht and the armies of Germany's allies, including the use of captured military equipment. By the way, in one of his articles, the famous scientist General of the Army M.A. Gareev remarked on this:

"<...> some historians who specialize in the subject of the Great Patriotic War are not particularly eager to work in archives, they have a poor command of foreign languages in order to freely use the original documents. A significant part of the captured documents of the Nazi army remains unexplored" [552].

The point is not at all a poor knowledge of foreign languages, but the fact that researchers do not know on what basis the Central Archive of the RF Ministry of Defense gives out only those captured documents of the defeated Wehrmacht that have already been translated into Russian. And do not let the originals. So we have to use the materials of foreign authors, who are free to choose the necessary documents in the archives

Germany USA.

Regarding the use of captured weapons and military equipment, M.A. Gareev writes:

"Having captured a significant part of Europe, [Germany received at its disposal large human, economic and technical resources. In 11 occupied countries, weapons, military equipment and material supplies of 92 French, 30 Czechoslovak, 22 Belgian, 18 Dutch, 12 British and 6 Norwegian divisions were captured. <...> In France, 3,000 aircraft and over 3,500 tanks were captured. In total, military equipment for 150 divisions was captured in 11 occupied countries" [553].

From the words of Gareev, a false impression may be created that all these divisions handed over their weapons in an organized manner, which, moreover, is in exemplary order. But this happened only in Czechoslovakia. The rest of the trophies the Germans had to get in battle. At the same time, a significant part of these weapons and military equipment was damaged or completely destroyed. For example, of all involved-

in the campaign in the West in May-June 1940 French and

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only a little more than half of the English tanks went to the Germans usable [554].

Let's try to figure out in more detail how many and where captured Polish, French and English tanks were actually used by the Germans.

In Poland, the Germans got 111 tanks and tankettes suitable for repair. Eight R7.Krým(3.7st)(p) tanks, the former Polish 7TR tanks, were in service with German tank divisions for some time. Company "Warsaw", equipped with these tanks and tankettes, October 6, 1940 participated in a solemn parade in the Polish capital captured by the Germans. Another company consisting of 21 R7.Krým (3.7st) (p) tanks was formed in May 1941 and included in the battalion of Hitler's personal guard. But just a few days before the start of the Great Patriotic War, they were all replaced by Czech tanks R7.38 (0. Only Polish tankettes were in service with the occupation and security units on the territory of Poland throughout the war [553].

During the campaign in the West, the Germans captured a total of 4930 various tracked combat vehicles, including tractors, and set up a whole program of their restoration and conversion for their needs. The lion's share of this technique was French-made. By the beginning of 1942, about 500 ET-17/18, 125 V-35, 200 N-35/38 and 20 5-35 tanks were repaired, and about 400 N-35/38 and 120 5-35 tanks were equipped with German double hatches for their commanders and radio stations. Some of the 5-35s were equipped with a German commander's cupola [556]. From May to October 1941, 200 K-35 tanks were equipped with 47-mm Czech guns and converted into anti-tank self-propelled guns [557].

Involuntarily, a legitimate question arises: why did such zealous owners like the Germans not adopt all the captured combat vehicles? Only because it is not at all easy to use foreign tanks. To do this, it was necessary to establish their uninterrupted supply of special ammunition, spare parts, tools and devices. We needed fuels and lubricants, often different from German standards. There was a need to create a system for the maintenance and repair of captured tanks, to train their crews and technical

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sky personnel, teach your troops to recognize them from afar accurately and quickly, etc. and so on. In addition to all these difficulties, most foreign-made tanks did not meet the German tactical requirements

to these combat vehicles. The shortcomings of the French tanks, revealed during the fighting in the West, have already been said. Their modification to bring them into line with Wehrmacht standards required a lot of time and money, so they were used mainly as a chassis for self-propelled guns, tractors and ammunition transporters.

Captured tanks were sometimes used in the construction of armored trains. They were placed entirely on railway platforms, thus turning them into armored platforms. At the same time, they had the opportunity to move to the ground in order to support the landing operations with fire and caterpillars. In June 1941, armored trains No. 26, 27 and 28 received three French 5-35 tanks, and armored trains No. 29, 30 and 31 received two of the same tanks. All these armored trains fought on the Eastern Front [558]. Sometimes captured tanks were built into long-term fortifications as stationary firing points. But a much larger number of them were simply shot, but at the training grounds instead of targets for training German tankers and artillerymen.

The Germans handed over a certain number of trophies to their allies, but even here they were talking about very small quantities. For example, on March 19, 1941, after Bulgaria joined the Tripartite Pact, the Germans sold her 40 French K-35 tanks [559]. In September 1939, the Romanians interned 34 Polish K-35 French-made tanks that had crossed the border to them. Earlier that year, they managed to import 41 tanks of the same type from France out of 200 ordered. After the outbreak of the war, supplies ceased [560]. These machines exhausted the use of French tanks by the Romanians during World War II.

The Germans used only a very limited number of captured tanks, although for their intended purpose, but to perform auxiliary functions. Thus, 350 ET-17/18, 30 V-35 and 60 N-35/38 French tanks were handed over to security units. In February 1941, the 1st battalion of the 202nd TP was equipped with 18 S-35s and 41 H-38s, and after mastering the new

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equipment in September of the same year was transferred to Yugoslavia to fight the partisans. There and with the same goals in May 1941 sent 30 ET-17/18. At the same time, they began to train 100 crews of these tanks to protect important military plants in [Germany and Czechoslovakia, and another 100 ET-17/18 — to defend the English Channel coast from landing forces. The next 100 ET-17/18 machine guns were handed over to the Luftwaffe in the same May, of which 25 were used in Holland in March 1943, 30 in Belgium and 45 in western France. They not only guarded airfields, but were also involved in clearing snow from runways in winter as bulldozers. Initially, 20 ET-17s and 10 H-35/38s were intended for occupational service in Crete, but in the autumn of 1941, the 212th separate tank brigade was transferred there, which had five 5-35s and 15 H-38s in service [561]. More examples of use can be given

in the Wehrmacht French armored vehicles. But even without them it is clear that it was of a very limited and auxiliary character. It is interesting that the Germans made extensive use of the French ET-17 tanks produced during the First World War. These hopelessly obsolete veterans were quite suitable for the tasks assigned to them, not too difficult and responsible, as they were very easy to repair and operate, and their small size and weight made it possible to transport them in the back of heavy trucks. Perhaps the best-known case of the use of captured tanks by the Germans in Operation Barbarossa is the conversion of 60 French tanks B1 and B2 into flame throwers. As part of the 102nd separate battalion of flamethrower tanks, 24 of them, together with six of their usual brothers, who received the designation Pz.Kfz. 139 in the Wehrmacht, participated in the breakthrough of the Rava-Russian fortified area in the Lvov region. But they fought there for a very short time, and by August 8, the battalion was disbanded. It should be noted that the

On their base in 1920, the first Soviet tank "Freedom Fighter Comrade Lenin" was built.

? On its basis, on November 17, 1941, the 213th separate tank brigade was created, which was armed with 10 flamethrower Pz.Kfz. 139 and 26 self-propelled guns based on it, which was used on captured tanks

tsami in the English Channel of the small English islands of Guernsey and Jersey [562].

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the small flamethrower Pz.Kfz. 139 were considered by the Germans not even tanks, but special combat vehicles, and therefore were not part of the tank divisions.

Only for the North, the Wehrmacht made an exception to the general rule: two separate tank battalions fought there, the 40th and 211th. This was due to the specifics of the northern theater of operations, its remoteness and the inconvenience of using large masses of tanks due to tank inaccessible terrain and adverse weather conditions. At the same time, the 211th brigade was equipped with captured French tanks in the amount of 44 pieces. During the war, due to heavy losses in tanks, the Germans resumed their attempts to use French combat vehicles, but only in small quantities and in secondary areas.

During the campaign in the West in May-June 1940, the Germans captured about 350 serviceable British tanks [563]. But if the repair of Polish and French tanks and the manufacture of spare parts for them could still somehow be arranged at the enterprises captured in these countries, then with captured English tanks this was not feasible. They were especially short of ammunition. Therefore, after tests to identify their fighting qualities, they were used,

mainly as visual aids in schools and anti-tank training centers or as targets at shooting ranges. Only one company of British A13 cruiser tanks fought on the Eastern Front as part of the 100th separate battalion of flamethrower tanks. They were enough for less than three weeks of fighting, after which all of them were written off as a result of breakdowns and combat damage [564].

A few more words on another aspect of the question connected with the use of captured tanks by the Germans. General Gareev complains that recently in numerous publications they allegedly compare all our tanks (including training, obsolete and non-combat capable) with the German ones that were in service. And wherein:

“German tanks that were available in training centers and military educational institutions, several thousand captured tanks and others are not taken into account. They say that the Germans used captured tanks mainly for training purposes and they did not participate on the Soviet-German front. But without them

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they could not prepare reserves. If they were not there, the German command would have been forced to withdraw part of the tanks from the front.

There is no single approach, no common denominator when counting the number of aircraft, artillery pieces and other types of combat equipment.

Thus, legends are born that by the beginning of the war we had 5-6 times more tanks and aircraft than in the fascist army” [565].

We are also for a unified approach when comparing data on the weapons of the Wehrmacht and the Red Army. Of course, one should not lose sight of the combat vehicles left in the rear, because it was on them that reinforcements for the front were being prepared. The number of Wehrmacht tanks that were on the eve of Operation Barba Rossa in the rear areas can be easily calculated, knowing their total number (5162) and the number of combat vehicles located at the fronts. On the borders of the USSR, 3728 tanks of German and Czech production were concentrated, another 287 were in Rommel's African Corps. Thus, the Germans had 1,147 tanks in their rear. There were also 87 assault guns. It was on this technique that future German tankers and self-propelled gunners were mainly trained in training and spare parts. In addition to combat vehicles, 150 Ga.5 tracked chassis, which were also called the Krupp Tractor [566], were used for training throughout the war. Captured vehicles only occasionally acted as training vehicles, in very limited quantities, and, in essence, did not make any weather.

Talking about other trophies of the Wehrmacht, M.A. Gareev claims:
“Trophy automotive equipment, the main

92 German divisions were equipped in the French way" [567]. This indeed applied to one armored, three motorized and 88 infantry divisions [568]. At first glance, it turns out that 44% of all Wehrmacht divisions then used captured vehicles. However, to complete the picture, it is very important to understand what these compounds were. Of the infantry divisions mentioned, 17 belonged to the 13th and 14th waves of the formation, poorly armed, with a very limited number of vehicles and serious

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shortcomings in staffing. They were intended to protect the sea coast and carry out occupational service. The 15 infantry divisions of the 15th wave, also equipped with captured vehicles, had an even lower combat capability: they had only two infantry regiments instead of three in the state. Instead of an artillery regiment, they had only one artillery battalion consisting of three light batteries, and they had no antitank weapons at all. They also lacked rear units. It is clear that they also performed only occupational duties, and were unsuitable for use at the front. None of these 32 divisions, of course, participated in Operation Barbarossa. And all nine security divisions served only in the rear of the Eastern Front, however, this is already clear from their very name. They were in no way capable of full-fledged front-line service, because their basis was a single infantry regiment and only one light artillery battalion of 3 batteries. Thus, on the eve of the Great Patriotic War, only 30% of fully combat-ready German divisions - 51 out of 167 - were equipped with captured vehicles [569]. The picture is not so much different than the one painted by some historians.

Soviet tank park. We should talk about Soviet armored vehicles in more detail, and here's why. The actual number of our tanks by the beginning of the war for a long time remained a "terrible" secret. Moreover, it was a secret from the Soviet people, because everything was known to Soviet specialists and foreign researchers for a long time. Official historians and military leaders, authors of well-known memoirs in the USSR, as soon as they did not dodge, hushing up the unpleasant fact that on the eve of the war we had several times more tanks than the Germans. They were forced to do this, because the main reasons for the German successes of the first period of the war, the official Soviet historiography, along with the suddenness of the attack, announced the numerical superiority of the Wehrmacht over the Red Army in tanks and aircraft. Speaking about the armament of the Red Army, very modest data were usually called. For example, the 12-volume Soviet "History of the Second World War" stated:

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"In the western border districts, there were 170 divisions and 2 brigades, 2680 thousand personnel, 37.5 thousand guns and mortars, 1475 new Kvi T-34 tanks, 1540 new types of combat aircraft, as well as a significant number of light tanks and combat aircraft of obsolete designs" [570].

These same crafty figures successfully migrated to the memoirs of Marshal Zhukov [571]. This is how many thousands of Soviet tanks and combat aircraft were debited from the account, most of which were produced "shortly before the war. Thus, the enormous work invested in their construction was completely undeservedly forgotten. The scale of this work is best characterized by the number of tanks then available in the Red Army.

As a result of the titanic efforts of the entire Soviet people in the construction of military vehicles and at the cost of a serious decrease in their standard of living in the prewar years, a gigantic tank fleet was created in the Red Army, without exaggeration. By the start of World War II, the Soviet Union had built twice as many tanks as all the rest of the world put together. During the period up to June 22, 1941, the country's industry supplied the Red Army with 30,120 tanks and

Light tank T-26 single turret

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Light tank T-26 double-turreted

wedges [572]. Some of them during this time were irretrievably lost in armed conflicts, sent to other states, decommissioned due to complete moral or physical wear and tear, severe accidents and accidents, and also for other reasons. As of June 1, 1941, the Red Army was armed with 23,078 tanks and 2,376 T-27 tankettes [573].

Light tank BT-7

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U: -a*r

Medium tank T-28

In five western military districts (these included the LVO, PribOVO, ZapOVO, KOVO and OdVO) then there were 12,765 tanks and 936 tankettes. From June 1 to June 21, 1941, the West

nye military districts received another 206 tanks, of which 41 KV, 138 T-34 and 27 T-40. They were distributed as follows: in LVO - 1 tank KV-1, in ZapOVO - 20 KV and 138 T-34 tanks, in KOVO - 20 KVi 27 T-40. Taking into account them, serviceable and suitable

Medium tank T-34

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Heavy tank T-35

10,738 tanks and 471 tankettes were used for their intended purpose in the western districts. Medium repairs were required for 1243 tanks and 176 tankettes, while the remaining 990 tanks and 289 tankettes needed major repairs [574]. Detailed data on the tanks of the Red Army at the beginning of the WAR with their distribution by districts, types and technical condition are given in Appendix 9. Here it is necessary

Heavy tank KV-1

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Heavy tank KV-2

it is necessary to explain what the serviceability categories of tanks reflected in the table are. "Manual on accounting and reporting in the Red Army" provided for the division of all military property according to its qualitative state into the following categories:

Category 1 - new, unused, meeting the requirements of technical specifications and quite fit for use for its intended purpose.

2nd category - the former (being) in operation, fully serviceable and usable for direct use.

3rd category - requiring repair in the district workshops (medium repair).

4th category - requiring repair in central workshops and factories (overhaul).

5th category - unusable. At the same time, cars of the 5th category were not included in the summary sheet.

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Enacted by orders of the NPO of the USSR No. 12-16 of 10.01.1940 from 04/01/1940.

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Trophies captured by the Germans in warehouses near Dubna

Serviceable tanks include vehicles of the 1st and 2nd categories.

It should be taken into account that the 2nd category also included property requiring military (current) repairs. It consisted mainly of fastening work and tightening of individual parts, carried out during operation and during technical inspections. If necessary, it was allowed to replace individual parts in the unit with its partial disassembly. Current repairs were carried out as needed by the crew under the guidance of a technician using an individual set of spare parts and tools carried in any conditions. Its duration was 5-8 hours. It is now impossible to determine the ratio of fully serviceable tanks that were included in the 2nd category, and tanks that required current repairs [575]. But this does not change the overall picture.

In addition to those listed above, the troops of the four reserve armies, who managed to arrive in the areas assigned to them in the western military districts, numbered 1,307 light tanks. The exact number of serviceable cars among them has not yet been clarified.

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nen. But knowing that the proportion of serviceable tanks in the troops of the second strategic echelon was 90.4%, it can be assumed with a high degree of certainty that among the arrivals there were 1182 serviceable and fit for use tanks [576].

It would seem that the publication of all these detailed data, especially by such a serious organization as the Institute of Military History of the Ministry of Defense of Russia, should have finally dotted the "i". But even today, when comparing the forces and means of the opposing sides, attempts to replicate long outdated data on the composition and armament of the Wehrmacht do not stop. So, M.A. Ta Reev seriously asserts:

"To attack the USSR, fascist Germany, together with its satellites, concentrated a grouping of armed forces <...> about 4,300 tanks and assault guns, including 2,800 heavy and medium <...>" [577]. Involuntarily, the question arises, where did he manage to count 2800 heavy and medium tanks of Germany and its satellites?

There were no heavy tanks in the Wehrmacht at that time, because it was still far from the appearance of the famous "tigers". One-

only the already mentioned captured French tanks B1 and B165 can be considered natural contenders for this name. These machines are sometimes classified as heavy, based on the French classification of the time of their creation. But let's use the same criteria for systematization. Obviously, in the early 40s, B1 and B1515 did not correspond to the weight category of heavy tanks. The first of them weighed 25 tons, that is, less than the famous Soviet medium tanks T-34 of the first production, and the second - 32 tons, or exactly the same as the T-34-85. But after all, no one has ever attributed thirty-fours to heavy tanks, therefore both B1 and B1B! \$ were not them at the beginning of the war.

Medium tanks R.Sh and R?7. [U, along with R?7.355, R7.V2 (Natt) and R7.V2, as well as two captured Soviet T-28s (from the Finns), in the Wehrmacht, along with all its allies, there were a total of 1,479 - almost half the number indicated by Gareev. Where did she come from? Even if we write P? 7.35 (@ and P?. 38 (®) into medium Czech ones, you still get only 2259 vehicles. But these tanks, weighing 9.7-10.5, armed with a 37-mm cannon, in no way pull on medium ,

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after all, according to similar indicators, they were noticeably inferior even to Soviet light tanks such as BT-5 and BT-7. Captured English tanks P7.A13, according to the basic data, also roughly corresponded to the light BT-7, and the French P7.38N did not even reach it. R7.P, whose combat weight did not exceed 10 tons, and the main armament was a 20-mm cannon, were all the more unsuitable for the role of medium tanks. And about the "unity", weighing less than BT and armed with a pair of rifle-caliber machine guns, there is nothing to say at all. Of all the allies of Germany who came out with them from the very beginning of the war, only the Finns had two captured T-28 medium tanks, but we have already taken them into account. Thus, talking about 2800 heavy and medium tanks of the Wehrmacht, concentrated for the fall on the USSR in 194], is simply not serious these days.

It should be noted that the irresponsible manipulations with figures and facts, which some venerable historians deliberately or unknowingly allow themselves, are by no means innocent. They provide an opportunity for various opportunists from history such as V. Rezun to demonstrate their superiority in erudition and gain a reputation as a specialist in the eyes of an inexperienced public. In fact, he is poorly versed in tanks. But even his modest knowledge was enough to caustically ridicule V.A. Anfilova, G.F. Krivosheev and other historians and authors of memoirs, who mentioned 35- and 38-ton German tanks in their works. And they meant the very light tanks R? 7.35 (0 and R7.38 (©), which we just mentioned. The Latin letter ">" in their German name had nothing to do with the weight of the vehicles. It only denoted the country of their manufacture, after all, "(5ÿÿÿÿ1 \$ ÿÿ" translated from German is Czech.

However, rightly criticizing his opponents for

technical illiteracy, Rezun himself immediately demonstrates its vivid example, quite seriously stating: "These tanks are the embodiment of technical backwardness in the worst possible way. This is visible to the naked eye: the armor on them is not welded, the armor plates are connected with rivets" [578]. We are talking about the same R7.35 (@) and R?.38 (0. But these combat vehicles rightfully belonged to one of the best light tanks of the Second World War. It is not for nothing that the Germans from all the numerous captured tanks foreign production fully adopted only them. The best in the world, according to Rezun,

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T-34 and KV were used in the Wehrmacht only occasionally. With everything, a small part of these tanks, which fell into German hands in large quantities, especially in the first half of the war, were put into service by them. But the reliable, durable, inexpensive and easy-to-use Czech combat vehicles were appreciated by the Germans and used to the fullest. Moreover, they continued to order the Czechs throughout the war, first R? 7.38 ({}), and then self-propelled guns based on it.

Rezun frankly "floats" not only in matters of purpose and tactics of using tanks (for which he was mercilessly criticized), but also in technical matters. Speaking contemptuously about Czech armor with rivets, he once again proves his blatant illiteracy in the tank production technology of that time. And it had its own traditions and peculiarities in each country. When assembling the hulls and turrets of Czech tanks, rivets were widely used, while welding was used for this in the USSR and Germany. Each of these processes has its own advantages and disadvantages. The advantages of welding are higher labor productivity and tightness of joints. But at the same time, overheating of the armor in the area of welds weakens its protective qualities. In addition, the scale formed on the inside of the power welded joint, in the event of a close hit by a projectile, crumbles, flies off and hits the tankmen right in the face, inflicting painful wounds and blinding them. Riveting is more labor intensive and requires highly skilled assemblers, especially to make the joints waterproof. The Czechs had no shortage of skilled and experienced riveters, and their tank hulls were airtight to a level of one meter above the ground. And the rivets themselves, made of special steel, were distinguished by sufficient resistance to bullets and splinters. In an objective comparison, the advantage of Czech tanks over BT is obvious by most indicators.

It is interesting how the Germans themselves assessed Soviet technology. In August-September 1941, they repaired and

' The volume of the book does not allow for a sufficiently deep comparison of the qualitative characteristics of Soviet and German tanks at the beginning of the war. More about this is described in the article by B. Kavalerchik "Which tanks were better in 1941" [579].

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15 captured BT tanks of various modifications and 16 T-26s were put into service with security divisions in the rear of the Eastern Front. By the end of the year, they had accumulated practical experience in their operation, quite sufficient for conclusions. On February 26, 1942, a report about this experience appeared in the Sever State Administration:

"Taking into account the fact that most of the Russian tanks were captured without any combat damage, it can be concluded that the development and manufacture of these tanks was accompanied by numerous defects. After repairs at the Riga Arsenal, where the tanks were completely dismantled, they constantly broke down due to poor construction and poor quality materials, despite careful assembly.

The following problems keep reoccurring:

1-26: Clutch lining worn out after a short run due to being too small. The control is unreliable because the band brakes used in the control mechanism overheat. The existing engine oil is not suitable for the high temperatures of the air-cooled engine, causing damage and seizing of the bearings. <...> Caterpillars very often fly off, because the crests of their tracks are unsatisfactory.

BT (Christy): The main cause of failure is the transmission, which is too weak for a powerful engine. It should provide the tank with high speed, but it is overstressed when driving off-road, when low gears have to be used for a long time. In addition, as in the T-26, problems associated with the overall design and poor quality of components and parts, such as failures in the electrical system, interruption of the fuel supply, breakage of oil lines, etc., constantly appear.

As for the armament of the captured Russian tanks, their machine guns cannot be coordinated with the sights, because they are rigidly mounted. During training shooting at a short distance, the target could not be hit, having used up 180 rounds.

In conclusion, captured Russian tanks cannot be used en masse. After they are delivered by rail to their destination areas, they may find limited use as mobile firing points" [580].

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This is an interesting characteristic. Particularly impressive is the recommendation on the method of using vehicles, which Rezun publicly declared "aggressor tanks" ...

It is interesting that the Germans began to attribute the very first failures in fulfilling the schedule of the Barbarossa plan to the superiority of the Russians in the number of tanks. Guderian, in his post-war memoirs, quoted Hitler's characteristic statement made by him at a conference with the command of the Army Group Center, which was held in Borisov on August 4, 1941: "If I knew that the Russians really had such a number of tanks <... > I probably wouldn't start this war" [581].

But Hitler was clearly lying. On February 3, 1941, Halder gave him a report on Operation Barbarossa. It contained information known to the Germans about Soviet tanks, which could be used against the Wehrmacht from the very beginning of the WAR:

"The number of tanks in general (infantry divisions + mobile formations) is very large (up to 10 thousand tanks against 3.5 thousand German tanks). However, given their quality, this superiority is negligible. Nevertheless, surprises are not ruled out" [552].

If we compare this figure with the already mentioned number of serviceable tanks in the western Soviet military districts - 10,738, not counting the number of tanks unknown to the Germans in the depths of the country - then we again see a fairly close coincidence with reality. And at the same time we will find out why the Germans were not afraid of the large Soviet numerical advantage in tanks: they considered their qualitative superiority quite sufficient to compensate for it. A surprise, which the cautious Halder did not exclude, was the appearance on the battlefields of the latest Soviet medium tanks T-34 and heavy KV. But even almost one and a half thousand of these very powerful combat vehicles for their time, available at the beginning of the war in the western military districts, turned out to be completely insufficient to change the course of the struggle. And it is clear why: as you know, it is necessary to fight not by numbers, but by skill. The essential superiority in the ability to fight in the first period of the war was on the side of the Germans, hence its results.

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The high saturation of the troops of the prewar Red Army with tanks created only the appearance of their indestructible combat power. Their main task - to scare away a potential aggressor and discourage him from attacking the USSR by the very fact of their existence - these tanks failed to solve. They failed to become the "lifesaver" of the Red Army in the border battle. Numerous steel armadas could neither bring victory to the Red Army, nor even prevent its heavy defeat. This outcome of events was quite predictable, because he had good reasons that were obvious to competent military specialists. The outstanding Soviet theoretician Triandafilloveshche wrote in 1929, 12 years before the start of the Great Patriotic War: "The increase

technical means of combat, which are in service with the modern army, and new methods of conducting combat, which provide small military units and individual soldiers with greater independence, require at the present time a higher level of training of the troops. An army that is insufficiently trained and cohesive is doomed to lose its weapons and be taken prisoner in large numbers" [583].

Prophetic words, Triandafillov looked into the water. This is exactly what happened in the hot summer of 1941.

The general condition of the Red Army in comparison with the Wehrmacht

Usually, when evaluating the troops of Germany and the USSR on the eve of the war, attention is first of all drawn to their numbers, the number of divisions and the main types of weapons. With this calculation, the Red Army surpassed the Wehrmacht in many respects. This is illustrated in Appendix 10.

However, a purely quantitative comparison, divorced from taking into account the qualitative indicators of the troops, does not make it possible to determine the actual balance of forces of the parties and may lead to incorrect conclusions. Moreover, they usually compare formations and units in their regular composition, full-blooded, trained and knocked together, sometimes forgetting that the German troops had long been mobilized and deployed by the beginning of the invasion, and ours entered the war from a position of peacetime. The reorganization of the organizational structure and one temporary rearmament of the troops, the completion of which is not

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enough time or material resources, undoubtedly led to a decrease in their combat readiness. The unreality of mobplans, the incompleteness of their development in the troops and enlistment offices only exacerbated the situation.

When trying to examine in more detail the state of our troops by June 1941 in comparison with the German picture, unfortunately, most often it turns out not in favor of the Red Army. The arguments of Rezun's like-minded people, among whom there are few people who know firsthand the problems of the army, are designed, first of all, for people who are illiterate in a military sense. They do not take into account the entire complexity of preparing commanders, staffs, and troops for military operations; they poorly represent the procedure and timing for transferring the army from a peaceful to a military position. On the side of military specialists, who are often indiscriminately and sometimes pejoratively referred to as "colonels" or "generals", have extensive experience of working not only in large headquarters, but also in the troops, as well as knowledge from the inside of all the complexity of practical work to increase their mobilization and combat readiness. It is surprising when, in matters of building up the armed forces, operational art and strategy, they begin to teach them the newly appeared "experts", as a rule, who have a very distant idea.

about elementary tactics even at the subunit level, not to mention units and formations. Such "specialists" prefer to talk with pathos about global general issues, not wanting to demonstrate their complete helplessness in particular ones. It is extremely easy and simple for them to launch an army of many millions on the offensive. Just a slight wave of the leader's hand is enough, and everything will go like clockwork. But it only happens smoothly on paper, but in reality the troops constantly have to overcome vast and deep ravines on their way. We will now recall some of them.

Personnel. The main asset of any organization, society or country as a whole, which determines its main advantages and disadvantages, are people. The armed forces are no exception. During the Second World War, in connection with the massive use of new types of weapons, the change and complication of combat, the requirements for not only regular military personnel, but also for those liable for military service increased sharply. This was especially true for their

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knowledge and skills in handling technology. In Germany, they have long understood the importance and necessity of a high educational level of future conscripts, which formed the basis of mass recovery. According to Chancellor Bismarck, the war with France in 1870-1871. won by an ordinary Prussian schoolteacher, and not at all by the famous Krupp steel cannons. By the end of the 19th century, Germany became the first country in the world with an overall literacy of the population. And in the USSR, according to the 1937 census, there were still almost 30 million illiterate people over the age of 15, or 18.5% of the total population [584].

At the end of 1939, there were 1,416,000 private cars in Germany alone [585]. For comparison, on June 1941 there were 120,000 passenger cars throughout the USSR [586]. On a per capita basis, the Germans owned 30 times more private cars than all cars of this class in the Soviet Union. More than two thirds of the population of the USSR then lived in rural areas, and the level of education of conscripts from there (especially from the national outskirts) left much to be desired. For the most part, before joining the army, they never even used a bicycle, not to mention motorcycles or cars. Thus, initially, only due to more competent and technically savvy human material, the Wehrmacht had a significant advantage over the Red Army. In the future, this superiority was further strengthened by high discipline, individual training and a better system of training, in which well-trained non-commissioned officers played a large role.

For the time being, the Soviet leadership did not pay due attention to the problem of training those liable for military service. According to the Act on the acceptance of the post of People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko, in 1940, among the military reserve there were 3,155,000 completely untrained accomplices, the plan

which the People's Commissariat had no training [587]. A large numerical superiority in men and military equipment was considered quite sufficient to defeat any enemy. No one thought much about the fact that this superiority must still be able to be successfully realized.

In Finland, the Red Army quite unexpectedly ran into stubborn resistance armed

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forces of this country, which were by no means among the strongest armies in the world, neither in numbers, nor in training, nor in equipment. However, the confrontation even with such an army immediately revealed a lot of significant flaws in the organization of training of the personnel of the Red Army. The scourge of the pre-war Red Army continued to be an unacceptably low level of discipline. In addition, frequent regroupings of troops in new, undeveloped areas of deployment, constant separation of personnel for construction and economic work, a weak educational and material base, and the inexperience of command personnel had a negative effect on the quality of combat training. Simplicity flourished in the classroom and even eyewash during inspections, exercises and combat firing. The already difficult situation was aggravated by the fact that all these shortcomings were revealed in the conditions of the already unleashed World War II, when the Wehrmacht over and over again quickly and more than convincingly defeated its opponents, much stronger than the Finns. The stunning successes of the Germans obviously and strikingly contrasted, to put it mildly, with the modest results of the Winter War, which were also obtained much earlier and at the cost of a lot of blood.

Immediately after his appointment, the new People's Commissar for Defense Timoshenko took drastic measures. On May 14, 1940, he issued Order No. 120 "On combat and political training of troops during the summer period of the 1940 academic year." It contained bitter confessions:

"The experience of the war in the Karelian-Finnish theater revealed major shortcomings in combat training and education of the army.

Military discipline was not up to the mark. <...>

The training of command personnel did not meet modern combat requirements.

The commanders did not command their subunits, did not hold their subordinates tightly in the hands, getting lost in the general mass of fighters.

The authority of the command staff in the middle and junior level is low. Demanding command staff is low. The commanders were sometimes criminally tolerant of violations of discipline, wranglings of subordinates, and sometimes even direct non-execution of orders.

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The weakest link was the commanders of companies, platoons and squads, who, as a rule, did not have the necessary training, commanding skills and service experience" [588].

Among the main tasks of troop training set there was the following: "To bring the training of troops closer to the conditions of combat reality." This principle was finally formulated in Order No. 30 "On Combat and Political Training of Troops for the 1941 Academic Year" dated January 21, 1941: "Teach troops only what is needed in war, and only in the way that is done in war" [589]. A beautifully chiselled wording, but the trouble is that it was born too late. There was absolutely not enough time for its practical implementation before the start of the war. The Red Army had to really learn how to fight directly in the course of an unprecedentedly cruel struggle against a strong, skillful and ruthless enemy, who did not forgive the slightest mistake and severely punished for everything and for each of them. Hence the heaviest defeats and enormous losses of the first period of the war...

Combat experience is one of the most important components of the combat effectiveness of troops. The only way to acquire, accumulate and consolidate it is direct participation in hostilities. Under fire soldiers know how to successfully perform their tasks under enemy fire, and their commanders know exactly what to expect from fighters in a real battle situation. Of particular value is the fresh combat experience gained by the troops in conditions similar to those where they will have to fight. At the same time, outdated combat experience often only hurts. For example, attempts to repeat dashing saber attacks, quite effective during the Civil War, during the Great Patriotic War led to directly opposite results. Most of the Soviet commanders who managed to fight, had a chance to do it back in the Civil War, which was of a peculiar nature. The fighting was mostly conducted by semi-partisan methods and was fundamentally different from the large-scale battles involving huge masses of regular troops, saturated to the limit with a variety of military equipment, which were characteristic of both world wars.

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In terms of the number of officers - veterans of the First World War - the Wehrmacht far exceeded the Red Army. And this is natural, considering how many Russian officers died during the revolution and [the civil war, fighting on both sides of the barricades, and even those who tried to remain neutral. After the defeat of the Whites, many "gold chasers" fled into exile, and many of the remaining were

shot by the Reds. First of all, this applied to regular officers of the Russian army, who managed to receive a full-fledged general and vocational education even before the start of the First World War. In this respect, they were head and shoulders above their much more numerous precocious wartime counterparts. The officers who remained in the ranks of the Red Army as a result of its post-war reduction, for the most part, were fired from there during numerous purges and trials in the early and second half of the thirties. The succession of officer traditions was interrupted. In Germany, however, it was possible to preserve the continuity and the best age-old traditions of the army and, on this basis, instill independence and initiative in the commanders of all levels in the performance of combat missions.

The more recent combat experience that the Red Army received in local conflicts with the Chinese on the CER, with the Japanese on Khasan and in the campaign in Poland was far inferior to the combat experience of the Wehrmacht in the Polish, Western European and Balkan campaigns. The scale and nature of the battles were beyond compare. Only battles on the river. Khalkhin Gol and especially the Finnish war made it possible to "fire" a relatively large number of Soviet units and formations. However, the combat experience gained in Finland at the cost of great bloodshed turned out to be not as useful for the Soviet command as it might seem at first glance. This war was fought in very specific natural and climatic conditions of the northwestern theater of operations. And the nature of the main hostilities there was strikingly different from what our army had to face in the war with the Wehrmacht. Many days of bloody battles on the "Mannerheim Line" made a strong impression on all of their participants and forced them to change their previous priorities in training troops. After them, in the Red Army, an unjustifiably large

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Attention began to be paid to the development of methods for breaking through the defense, equipped with powerful fortifications. This skill of Soviet soldiers and commanders was ONLY SUITABLE at the final stage of the war with Germany, when they approached East Prussia with its still pre-war stationary lines of fortifications.

In addition, the combat experience of even those Soviet units and formations that nevertheless received it was largely lost by the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. For example, all eight Soviet tank brigades that participated in the battles with the Finns were disbanded and turned to the formation of mechanized corps. The same fate befell the nine consolidated tank regiments and 38 tank battalions of rifle divisions that fought there. Most of the rank and file soldiers and junior commanders, veterans of the Finnish War and the conflict at Khalkhin Gol, were demobilized by June 1941, and unfired recruits came in their place. Therefore, even units and formations that had time to fight lost their combat hardening, training and solidarity to a large extent. To that

Initially, there were not so many of them. On the eve of the war, the western border military districts of the Red Army included only 42 formations with combat experience in Khalkhin-Gyul or the Finnish War, or less than a quarter of all available. In contrast, 82% of the divisions of the German army assigned to Operation Barbarossa had fresh combat experience gained directly from the battles in Europe in 1939-1941. And in the rest of the German formations, too, there were enough veterans of these campaigns [590].

We must not forget that the scale of the hostilities in which the Germans had a chance to participate was much more significant than that of the Red Army. Thus, the Wehrmacht had, without exaggeration, an overwhelming superiority over the Red Army in the practical experience of modern mobile warfare. And that was the kind of war he had imposed on her from the very beginning.

In connection with the rapid growth in the size of the armed forces and the pre-war repressions, the level of training of Soviet commanders at the tactical level, and especially operational

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By the beginning of the war, they had limited combat experience: in the LVO - 10 divisions (46.5% of all included in its composition), in PribOVO - 4 (14.3%), in ZapOVO - 13 (28%), in KOVO - 12 (19.5%), in OdVO - 3 (20%).

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Noah training of senior officers of the Red Army has dropped sharply. The most prominent Soviet theoreticians and practitioners of military affairs, who had the courage to defend their views, were declared enemies of the people and destroyed. And along with them, their practical recommendations for preparing and conducting operations in the new conditions have sunk into oblivion. Among them were many dozens of the best commanders of the Red Army, including those from the highest levels, who had been trained in German military schools in the USSR or in Germany itself, including the Reichswehr General Staff Academy. They never had a chance to use this training, and their experience and abilities against their German teachers. Almost all of them suffered the same tragic fate: they were destroyed during the Great Terror as fascist spies. Their knowledge of the strategy and tactics of the Wehrmacht, which they received first-hand, from the Germans themselves, were buried with them in nameless graves ... As a result, in the operational training system, there was a separation of the theory and practice of planning operations and commanding requirements of modern warfare.

The rapid formation of new associations and large formations of the Red Army led to the mass promotion to the highest positions of commanders and staff workers, whose career growth was rapid, but not always justified. The People's Commissar of Defense in directive No. 503138 / op dated 01/25/1941 stated:

"1. The experience of recent wars, campaigns, field trips and exercises showed the low operational training of the highest command staff, military headquarters, army and front departments <...>.

The senior command staff <...> still does not properly master the method of correctly and fully assessing the situation and making a decision in accordance with the plan of the high command. <...>

Military headquarters, army and front departments <...> have only basic knowledge and a superficial understanding of the nature of the modern operation of the army and the front. <...>

It is clear that with such a level of operational training of the highest command personnel and staffs, it is impossible to count on a decisive success in a modern operation.

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In the order of the directive, in particular, it was said:

"... 2) all army departments <...> by July 1 to complete the study and development of an army offensive operation, by November 1 - a defensive operation" [591].

But the measures taken could not quickly rectify this situation. There was no personnel reserve, and the commanders who were promoted to higher positions after systematic purges had nowhere to gain experience: major maneuvers began to be carried out in 1935-1937, and the army administrations were restored only in 1939 before the Polish campaign. By the beginning of the war, 20 army directorates had been created. Before the war, the commanders and employees of large military headquarters, army and front departments had completely insufficient skills in organizing combat operations of troops, interaction, combat, technical and logistics support. In addition, the headquarters of the armies, as well as the headquarters of the districts, were not staffed with personnel, means of communication and transport, even in peacetime states. Thus, the administration of the 13th Army of the ZapOVO, which had already been assigned a cover area for the state border No. 3, began to form only in the first half of May 1941. there was no connection at all. There was a shortage of 64 commanding officers [592]. The army never reached its Belsky cover sector. The 49th Rifle Division, which was part of it, located in the border zone, had to be reassigned to the 10th Army already during the fighting.

On May 17, 1941, Timoshenko signed Directive No. 34678 "On the tasks of combat training for the summer period of 1941." There, on the basis of data obtained during the verification by the People's Commissariat of Defense and the leadership of the districts of the course of combat training of troops, many bitter words were said about the identified shortcomings. Among them was this: "Not worked out

interaction in combat of motorized troops with sapper units, artillery and aviation, especially in difficult terrain and in complex types of combat. The same directive quite rightly stated that "that

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The army is the highest operational formation of the ground forces, its composition depends on the operational mission.

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in modern warfare there will be no simple forms of combat, and that the basis of success in modern combat is the organization of the interaction of all branches of the armed forces from top to bottom" [593].

The situation was no better with the commanders of the operational-strategic (front) level, who at major exercises and maneuvers (with the exception of the games held in December 1940) never acted as trainees, but only as leaders. This also applies to the newly appointed commanders of the border special military districts, whose troops opposed the fully deployed Wehrmacht.

For example, for 12 years KOVO was headed by I. Yakir, who was later shot. Then the district was commanded by Timoshenko, Zhukov, and from February 1941 - Colonel General M.P. Kirponos¹. Commanding in 1939-1940. 70th Rifle Division, for distinction in the capture of Vyborg, he received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. A month after the end of the Winter War, he was already in command of a rifle corps, and in June of the same year, the Leningrad Military District. Of course, by the beginning of the war, Kirponos did not have sufficient experience in managing large formations of troops.

The position of commander of the Western Special Military District, which at one time was led by I.P. Uborevich, from June 1940 was occupied by General of the Army D.G. Pavlov². Since 1928 he is the commander and military commissar of the cavalry regiment

¹Kirponos Mikhail Petrovich (01/21/1892 - 09/20/1941). Mobilized in 1915, graduated from instructor courses at the Oranien-Baum Officer Rifle School. After graduating from the Military Paramedic School in 1917, he served at the front as a company paramedic. In the Red Army in 1918, he was one of the organizers of the insurrectionary movement in Ukraine. He was a battalion commander, and then chief of staff, assistant commander and, finally, regiment commander. In 1922, he graduated from the school of red foremen in Kyiv as an external student, after which he became an assistant to its chief and commissar. In 1927 he graduated from the Military Academy of the Red Army. Frunze. Served as Chief of Staff of the 51st Rifle Division. From March 1934, he took the post of head and military commissar of the Kazan Infantry School.

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Pavlov Dmitry Grigorievich (December 4, 1897 - July 22, 1941). In 1914 juvenile voluntarily went to the front. He received the rank of senior non-commissioned officer, and in 1916 he was wounded and taken prisoner. In the Red Army since 1919, the commander of a platoon, squadron, at the end of the Civil War - assistant commander of the cavalry regiment. In 1920 he graduated from the Kostroma Infantry

courses, in 1922 - the Omsk Higher Cavalry School, in 1928 - the Military Academy of the Red Army. Frunze, and in 1931 - Academic courses at the Military Technical Academy of the Red Army. Dzerzhinsky.

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and a mechanized regiment, ace 1934 - commander and military commissar of a mechanized brigade. Participated in battles on the CER. For six months he commanded a tank brigade in Spain, where he earned the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. In August 1937, he began working at the ABTU of the Red Army, and in November of the same year he became its chief. During the Finnish war, he inspected the troops of the Northwestern Front. With such, to put it mildly, unimpressive command baggage, in June 1940 he was appointed to the post of commander of the ZapOVO troops.

Commander of PribOVO, Colonel-General F.I. Kuznetsov, judging by the positions he held, had a good theoretical background.' But he also lacked the practical skills of a commander. Although, as deputy commander of the Belorussian Front in September 1939, he took part in a campaign in Western Belarus. From July 1940 he was the head of the Academy of the General Staff of the Red Army, already in August 1940 he was appointed commander of the North Caucasian Military District, and in December of the same year - commander of PribOVO.

Even from their brief biographies, it is clear that not one of the commanders of the western border military districts, who were officially called "special" for their importance, did not correspond much to the level of their qualifications and experience of their position. None of them fully possessed the skills of operational-strategic planning and, before being appointed to their high and responsible posts, did not receive the practice of independent control of large masses of troops. Fate gave too little time for their formation. Their German opponents felt much more confident at the head of their troops. To be convinced of this, it suffices to compare the above brief biographies of Soviet military leaders and

' Kuznetsov Fedor Isidorovich (09/29/1898 - 03/22/1961). In 1916 he graduated from the ensign school. Platoon commander, then head of the reconnaissance team on foot. In the Red Army since 1918 In the Civil War, the commander of a company, battalion and regiment. In 1926 he graduated from the Military Academy of the Red Army. Frunze, and in 1930 - Improvement courses for the highest commanding staff under her. Served as a regimental commander. From March 1930 he was the head of the training department, and from February 1933 he was the head, first of the Moscow, and then of the Tambov infantry schools. From April 1935, Kuznetsov headed the Department of General Tactics of the Military Academy of the Red Army. Frunze. From January 1937 he became a senior lecturer in infantry tactics, and then head of the department of tactics at the same academy.

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logical biographies of the commanders of the German army groups that opposed them. Let's start, as it should be in the Wehrmacht, from right to left.

The commander of the GA "South" Field Marshal von Rundstedt, a participant in the First World War, which he graduated from as the chief of staff of the corps with the rank of major. He continued to serve in the Reichswehr. In September 1932, he was promoted to General of the Infantry and was appointed commander of the 1st Army Group, consisting of four military regions and six divisions, which amounted to more than half of the then Reichswehr. In November 1938, due to disagreements with Hitler, he was dismissed with the rank of colonel general. In April 1939 he was returned to the Wehrmacht. During the Polish campaign, he led Army Group South, consisting of three armies, whose troops delivered the main blow. During the campaign in France, he commanded Army Group A, consisting of four armies and a tank group, which played a key role in the German victory.

GA "Center" was commanded by Field Marshal Fedor von Bock. With the outbreak of the First World War, he was the head of the operational department of the Guards Infantry Corps. In May 1915 he was transferred to the headquarters of the 11th Army. At the beginning of 1916, to gain command experience, he was sent to the troops as a battalion commander for two weeks, then returned to staff work. He finished the war as chief of the operations department of an army group with the rank of major. In the Reichswehr, von Bock continued to serve in various staff and command positions. In 1929 - major general, commander of the 1st cd. In 1931, he was transferred to the post of commander of the 2nd Infantry Division, led the Stettin Military District. Since 1935 he has been in command of the 3rd Army Group. It was his troops who carried out the Anschluss of Austria. In the war with Poland, he headed the GA "North" as part of two armies. During the French

'Karl Rudolf Gerd von Rundstedt (12/12/1875 - 02/24/1953). After 4 years of study at a cadet school, six months before his 17th birthday, he entered the military service. Becoming a lieutenant (1893), in 1902.

entered the military academy, after the successful completion of which from 1907 to 1910 he served in the General Staff, and then in the troops.

? Fedor von Bock (December 3, 1880 - May 4, 1945). After graduating from the Prussian ka children's corps, on March 15, 1898, he entered military service as a lieutenant. In 1912, after graduating from the military academy, with the rank of captain, he was appointed head of the logistics service of the guards infantry corps.

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tsuzskoy campaign was the commander of GA "B", which initially included two, and then three armies and a tank group.

The commander of the GA "North" was Field Marshal von Leeb'. With the outbreak of the First World War - captain, head of the logistics service of the 1st Bavarian corps. From March 1915 - Chief of Staff of the 11th Bavarian

infantry division. He ended the war as a major in the position of head of the logistics service of an army group of four armies. As part of the Reichswehr in 1923, he participated in the suppression of the Nazi "beer putsch". In 1930 - lieutenant general, commander of the 7th infantry division, at the same time commanded the 7th military district and was the military commandant of Bavaria. In October 1933 he became commander of the 2nd Army Group. On March 1, 1938, at the entrance of the Nazi purge of the army, he was dismissed with the rank of colonel general. But already in July he was again returned to the service to the post of commander of the newly formed 12th Army. Participated in the occupation of the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia. From the very beginning of World War II, on the Western Front, he commanded Army Group C, consisting of two armies.

The contrast in the level of training, qualifications, service and combat experience of the opposing commanders is more than obvious. A useful school for the generals [of Germany] was their consistent promotion through the ranks. They had the opportunity to fully master and practice the difficult art of planning combat operations and leading troops in a highly maneuverable war against a strong and well-equipped enemy. Before the invasion of the USSR, the Germans brilliantly completed real blitzkriegs in Poland and Western Europe, and then another one in the Balkans. At the same time, the scale of the hostilities in which the Wehrmacht had a chance to participate was much more significant than that of the Red Army. Under enemy fire, many tactical and operational innovations that were previously found by the Germans only theoretically and tested only on

'Wilhelm Joseph Franz von Leeb (09/05/1876 - 04/29/1966). In 1895 he entered the 4th Bavarian artillery regiment. Lieutenant (1897) in 1900 participated in the suppression of the boxer uprising in China. After graduating from the military academy in 1909, he served in the General Staff, then commanded an artillery battery.

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exercises. Based on the results obtained on the battlefields, the Germans made important improvements in the structure of their units, units and formations, in combat regulations and in the methodology of training troops.

Raised by the will of the leader to a height inaccessible to them in the usual order, the Soviet commanders felt uncertainly at the head of such important border districts. The sad fate of their predecessors constantly loomed before their eyes. Therefore, they blindly followed the instructions of Stalin, who at that time was poorly versed in the operational and strategic intricacies of military affairs. The timid attempts of some of them to show independence in resolving issues of increasing the readiness of troops to repel a surprise attack by the enemy were immediately suppressed by the "Master" and his apparatus.

Of course, it is unlikely that anyone who appeared in the place of the commanders of PriboVO, ZAPOVO and KOVO in June 1941 managed to defeat the Wehrmacht troops opposing them or at least stop their advance. There were too many other reasons for the defeat of the regular army in the border battles, except for incompetent command. But the mistakes of the highest Soviet military and political

leadership, including district commanders, multiplied the scale of the defeats of the Red Army in the initial period of the war and aggravated their dire consequences. Sometimes one can hear the opinion that even the military leaders destroyed by Stalin could not have coped with this task. It is difficult to say for sure, but the people who went through the First World War and occupied high positions during the Civil War and in the post-war period were already strong in that they had independence and were not afraid to express their opinion. They had extensive experience in leading large masses of troops, on their back they learned the importance and price of combat, technical and logistic support in the difficult conditions of the Civil War. In any case, they would not blindly follow instructions that did not correspond to their views on the organization of the armed forces and their preparation for war. For this they were shot. Had they lived until June 22, no doubt, much would have turned out differently. More experienced and determined military leaders, not afraid to defend their opinions, are not in

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an example to the same Pavlov with his "curators" in the person of Shaposhnikov, Voroshilov and Kulik, could significantly improve the situation. Incorrect placement of personnel in key positions is always especially costly.

In order to increase the combat and mobilization readiness before the war in the Red Army, measures were planned and carried out aimed at strengthening the strike force, firepower, maneuverability, as well as the security and controllability of formations and units. To the main of them can be attributed to the improvement of the organizational structure of the troops; the gradual transfer of formations and units to states close to wartime; equipping them with more advanced weapons and equipment. However, the changes introduced were not always well thought out. In addition, the lack of time and the limited possibilities of industry did not allow us to fully complete what had been planned. Let us briefly consider the state of the ground forces and the Red Army Air Force at the beginning of the war.

The basis of the Red Army, like any other regular army in the world, was rifle troops, in other words, infantry. Unlike the technical branches of the military, the infantry has always been much more conservative. Nevertheless, from September 1939 to June 1941, the regular structure of rifle divisions changed three times. At the same time, the "triple deployment" divisions were transferred to ordinary divisions, and their number increased from 98 in January 1939 to 198! by early April 1941.

According to the staff approved in April 1941, the number of personnel in the division was reduced to 14,483 people, i.e. by 23%, and horse composition - by 51%. It was mainly the infantry and rear units that were reduced. The division became less bulky, but hardly more mobile. Tank battalions were withdrawn from the majority of rifle formations and survived only in 18 Far Eastern divisions. According to the staff, rifle divisions were well equipped with artillery and, in addition to three rifle divisions, had two artillery regiments, one of which was howitzer. Only 43 divisions, due to the lack of materiel, had one artillery regiment each [594]. The total weight of all regular artillery and mortars of a rifle division

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Including 2 motorized rifle and 19 mountain rifle divisions.

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in 1940 it reached 1822.2 kg, an increase of almost 70% over the previous 5 years [595]. Perhaps the main drawback of their artillery fleet was the insufficient number of medium and large caliber mortars. Numerous, but not powerful 50-mm mortars could not fully replace them in terms of range and effectiveness of fire damage.

But in reality, things were much worse than on paper. First of all, because the formations of even the western military districts were kept according to the peacetime states. At the same time, the shortage in personnel ranged from 20 to 40%, in cars and tractors - more than half. There were not enough field and anti-aircraft guns, there were very few machine guns [596]. By June, the units managed to be replenished somewhat by calling up conscripts for training camps. However, the divisions were still in dire need of replenishment with vehicles, including horse-drawn ones. The time required for this, calculated for peacetime conditions, with the outbreak of hostilities turned out to be unrealistic, especially for the divisions of the border military districts. In addition, subsequent events showed that unprepared recruits from among the local residents of the annexed territories fled already in the first battles.

It must be admitted that the quality of the then Soviet infantry left much to be desired. There were many reasons for this, but it all started with the residual principle of its recruitment. The conscripts who remained after their selection for the acquisition of aviation, artillery, tank units, cavalry, engineering units, and even units of the local guard [597] fell into the infantry. She got recruits not the most literate and intelligent, shorter in stature, narrower in shoulders and often unable to speak Russian. Instead of a military specialty, they first of all had to be taught elementary Russian for a long time. Meanwhile, it was the infantrymen who withstood the main hardships of the war on their shoulders, and they also bore the heaviest losses on it.

The Finnish war clearly demonstrated that the insufficiently trained Soviet infantry did not show the proper initiative and perseverance in the offensive. Often, she did not fire from personal weapons, expecting that all enemy firing points that interfered with her would be suppressed by artillery.

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The infantry did not know how to competently interact with other branches of the military, especially with tanks. These shortcomings were not out of existence even by the beginning of the Great Patriotic War and undoubtedly prevented the full use of the potential of rifle formations. The Soviet infantry was armed with quite enough firepower. For example, rifle units outnumbered the German infantry in the number of automatic weapons: light and heavy machine guns, machine guns (submachine guns), self-loading rifles. So, the Soviet rifle battalion was armed with 36 light and 18 heavy machine guns, and the German infantry battalion had 36 light and 12 heavy machine guns. Nevertheless, the German infantry significantly outnumbered the Soviet in terms of fire density. The fact is that the main German machine gun of that period, the MS 34, could be used both from a tripod as an easel, and from a bipod as a manual one. Belt feed gave him the ability to fire from 300 to 400 bullets per minute at a rate of fire of 800-900 shots / min [598], and a quick-change barrel made it possible to maintain such a fire for a long time, avoiding overheating. Due to this, the MS 34 was significantly superior in firepower to light machine guns. For comparison, at a rate of fire of 600 rds / min. the combat rate of fire of the Soviet hand-held DP-27 reached only 80 rds / min, and the water-cooled easel "Maxim" - up to 200-250 rds / min. [599]. Instead of a tape that interfered with the movement of the machine gun, a much more convenient magazine for 75 rounds could be used on the MO34 machine gun. With him, German machine gunners were able to move quickly on the battlefield without stopping fire. Even greater superiority over the units of the Soviet infantry could be created by the corresponding units of the German motorized infantry. In the motor infantry and motorcycle battalions of the German tank divisions, there were 58 light and 12 heavy machine guns (in motorized divisions - 4 light machine guns less) [600]. Thus, these units exceeded the Soviet rifle battalions in the total combat rate of fire of their machine guns by more than three times! And it was they who, as a rule, went in the forefront of the attackers.

The German infantry used their machine guns very skillfully in combat, constantly creating a high density of fire in

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decisive points. The shower of bullets that rained down on the German opponents throughout the battle gave rise to widespread and enduring myths about the ubiquitous

divisions of German submachine gunners. In fact, such units did not exist in the German infantry. Only commanders of squads and platoons were armed with machine guns there. And the Wehrmacht soldiers created fire superiority with their machine guns, skillfully maneuvering them in battle and concentrating heavy fire at the right time and in the right place. Thus, they literally suppressed their opponents and did not allow them to raise their heads to conduct aimed fire. So the Germans skillfully converted the high combat characteristics of their machine guns into tactical advantages. To this must be added continuous artillery and air support for the advancing German infantry.

Inspection checks and military exercises conducted in the spring of 1941 showed poor training of formations and units of rifle troops, their low combat readiness. So, in the order of the commander of PribOVO a week before the start of the war, the low combat readiness of the district troops was noted. In particular, it emphasized that the collection of personnel of formations and units on alert is carried out slowly, especially units engaged in defensive work, the deadlines for occupying defensive structures and lines were disrupted (from 4 to 20 hours were allotted for this, depending on the distance from dislocation points) [601]. The divisions of the western border districts, whose combat training was rated no higher than satisfactory, were opposed by fully mobilized, equipped with weapons and equipment according to wartime states and having rich combat experience, German troops.

At the same time, the very first battles showed that many rifle units of the Red Army, led by competent and determined commanders, unlike the Polish and French troops, continued to fight stubbornly even in complete encirclement. The Germans, along with shortcomings, noted the undoubted advantages of the Soviet infantry: resilience in defense, unpretentiousness, the ability to disguise and apply to the terrain, resistance to losses, and insensitivity to detours and coverage.

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In the prewar years, the tank troops of the Red Army had to go through repeated deep and not always justified transformations, which had a negative effect on their combat capability. The desire to ensure quantitative superiority over a potential enemy led to megalomania, expressed in the formation of 30 mechanized corps, each of which was supposed to have more than a thousand tanks according to the state. The organizational leapfrog was aggravated by insufficient training, and often simply by the technical illiteracy of Soviet tankers. The lack of skills in handling machines and mechanisms among most of the recruits was especially evident when they got to serve in tank troops. They were not accustomed to comply with the rules for handling military equipment that was too complicated for them, did not understand the importance of its timely maintenance.

living and often made gross mistakes during its operation. For example, at the beginning of 1941, there were cases when tankers unknowingly refueled the T-34 with gasoline, thereby completely disabling its diesel engine. At the same time, the system for training qualified personnel for tank troops suffered from major shortcomings. And there was no one to teach them. By the beginning of the war, the staffing of the corps by the commanding staff ranged from 22 to 40%. About 20,000 tank commanders [602] were still missing to fill the states.

In addition, resources for combat training in the pre-war Red Army were allocated very sparingly. While nothing was spared in the mass production of new technology, strict economy of material resources was placed at the forefront in its use. The need for comprehensive training of combat vehicle crews was clearly underestimated. But any of the best technology is dead without people who know how to master it perfectly. As of June 1, 1941, only 70 KVs and 38 T-34s [603] were in use in the combat training parks of the western military districts, while the rest were mothballed. And this was at the very moment when 469 KV and 832 T-34s were in service there! [604]. Moreover, the operating instructions for the new tanks were not transferred to the units, because by order of the General Staff itself, the KV and T-34 were considered "top secret" vehicles. That's why

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the documentation for them was kept at the headquarters of the mechanized corps "behind seven locks" and was issued to tankers only for the duration of the classes against signature, while taking notes on it was strictly forbidden.

It is not surprising that on the eve of the war in the western military districts they managed to train no more than 150 crews for KV tanks and about the same number for thirty-fours [605]. Thus, only 20% of these vehicles received tankers trained for them. The crews of the old types of tanks, as a rule, owned their combat vehicles much better than those who fought on the T-34 and KV. There is no point in arguing about the high combat qualities of the latest pre-war Soviet medium and heavy tanks if there was no one to put them into practice. In the same way, it is pointless to talk about the combat potential of tank units, based only on a scrupulous calculation of the number of their combat vehicles. After all, not tanks are fighting, but people. And unprepared people in a fight with an experienced and skillful opponent are doomed to defeat. Moreover, this unpreparedness is immediately noticeable to an experienced eye and only encourages the enemy, giving him more confidence in his abilities. The low degree of training of Soviet tank drivers at the beginning of the war was noted in his diary by the chief of staff of the German ground forces, Franz Halder [606]. And this is not surprising, because the mechanics of the thirty-four drivers then had practical driving experience, at best, 11 hours. The drivers of heavy KV tanks had this experience for at least 30 hours, but when they acquired it, they mostly used T-27 wedges, which

were almost 20 times lighter than HF. This practice began with NPO Order No. 0349 "On the Preservation of Heavy and Medium Tanks" dated December 10, 1940. It prescribed:

"In order to save the material part of heavy and medium tanks (T-35, KV, T-28, T-34) and maintain them in constant combat readiness with the maximum number of motor resources, I order:

J) All tank battalions (training and line) of heavy and medium tanks by January 15, 1941 to be equipped with T-27 tanks at the rate of [0 tanks for each battalion.

All tactical exercises of these battalions should be carried out on T-27 tanks.

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For training the personnel of heavy and medium tanks in driving and shooting and for knocking together units and formations, it is allowed to spend on each heavy and medium vehicle:

a) combat training park - 30 engine hours per year,

6) combat park - 15 engine hours per year.

The rest of the number of engine hours allocated for combat training in accordance with the order of the NPO dated October 24, 1940 No. 0253, to be covered by T-27 tanks" [607].

First of all, the obsolete T-27 tankettes, which were being prepared for decommissioning, were sent to battalions equipped with the most expensive KV tanks, so this practice was most widespread there. But earlier in the Red Army great attention was paid to the preservation of the resource of equipment. According to the "Regulations on the procedure for the operation of tanks, cars, tractors and motorcycles in the Red Army in peacetime", all tanks in service with parts of the Red Army were divided into combat and combat training [608]. Battle tanks included the best, serviceable and fully equipped with everything necessary vehicles with a resource before the next average repair of at least 75 hours. As a rule, these were tanks of the latest releases, no older than five years old. They were kept in full combat readiness for conservation and were periodically exploited, but at the same time they spent no more than 30 engine hours per year per vehicle. Under the same conditions, tanks from the emergency reserve were stored, which were sometimes available in units in excess of the established staff. However, unlike the machines from the combat fleet, their operation was completely prohibited.

The preservation of the tanks that were mothballed was treated very strictly. Even their own crews were allowed to them only with the written permission of the commander.

parts. Periodically, but not less than once every two months, the combat readiness of these vehicles was personally checked by the formation commander. The plan for using the resource of battle tanks, drawn up by the commander of the formation, was approved by the head of the ABT of the district troops. The resource was spent only for the training of units and formations in tactical exercises, mobile camps and combat firing by units. Remove battle tanks from

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Conservation began by order only after the outbreak of hostilities.

The tanks of the combat training park were kept separately by the troops. These included the oldest and most worn-out machines. It was they who served for the daily combat training of tankers. In military educational institutions, all available tanks were combat training. Despite intensive use, combat training tanks were also constantly maintained in a state of full combat readiness. It was allowed to operate them only within the established norms. After each exit in the field, it was required to immediately bring them into full order, refuel, lubricate, clean and only then put them in storage. Combat training vehicles after they were sent for repair were forbidden to be replaced by combat vehicles. Upon returning to the unit from the overhaul, they were sent to the battle park, and from there, in return, by special order, the tanks with the highest output of motor resources were transferred to combat training. Thus, the number of vehicles in the combat park remained unchanged.

The system for saving motor resources of equipment operated in the Red Army before the war for many years. Therefore, most tanks produced in the second half of the 1930s by the beginning of World War II retained a quite acceptable resource reserve, especially since their engines initially had a minimum operating time before overhaul of up to 600 or more engine hours. The resource of the V-2 diesel engine, modifications of which were installed on the BT-7M, T-34 and KV tanks, was very far from these figures at that time. Despite the requirements of the ABTU to ensure a guaranteed operating time before overhaul of at least 200 engine hours, for the T-34 engine this indicator then averaged only 100–120 engine hours, and for the KV engine it was even less, 80–100 engine hours [609]. The reason for this was simple: the recently appeared V-2 engine was still very crude and had not yet managed to get out of the period of "childhood illnesses". As a matter of fact, it was precisely its obviously insufficient reliability and durability that were the root causes for the replacement of the T-34 and KV tanks with T-27 tankettes for training tankers.

The technical and logistical support of the tank forces of the Red Army also left much to be desired. Tank formations were equipped with Tol trucks.

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to 41%, mobile repair shops - 34.7%, gas tanks - 18.5% and mobile charging stations - 28.2% of the wartime state. At the same time, vehicles had almost no stocks of tires: they were used up during the hostilities in Mongolia, Poland and Finland. For the first half of 1941, tires were allocated only 37% of the annual application. When calculating the shortage of auxiliary equipment in the pre-war Soviet tank forces, it must be taken into account that the total number of tanks was 61.4% of the wartime staff. Therefore, the relative shortage of auxiliary equipment in terms of the tanks available in the units was about one and a half times less than the absolute one. However, this did little to improve the overall bleak picture.

There were not enough spare parts for numerous, but not very reliable equipment. In the USSR, traditionally, priority was given to the production of basic products and completely insufficient attention to the supply of spare parts. In 1941, the production of spare parts for the T-28 tanks and M-5 and M-17 engines was completely stopped, and for the T-37A, T-38, T-26 and BT tanks it was reduced. This happened because by that time they were no longer built, and all the resources of the tank industry were thrown into the manufacture of the T-40, T-34 and KV, to prepare for the production of the T-50, as well as to produce spare parts for new tanks. The previously accumulated stocks of spare parts for the most massive Soviet pre-war T-26 tanks were almost completely used up during the Finnish war, so in 1941 the construction of a spare parts plant for the T-26 in Chkalovsk had to be urgently started. In 1941 funds for spare parts for tanks were allocated in the amount of only 46% of the estimated requirements. There was not only a lack of spare parts, but also the most necessary materials, machine tools and tools, so the plan for the repair of equipment in the first half of 1941 was carried out only by 45-70% [610]. But it was still peacetime, when the volume of repair work was much less than those that had to be encountered in the war.

In the tank troops of the Wehrmacht, many of the problems inherent in the Red Army have already been resolved. The organization of the German panzer divisions was constantly improved taking into account the combat

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experience and by the beginning of the Great Patriotic War was close to optimal for that period. It is interesting to follow the dynamics of its development. Just before the outbreak of World War II, the first five German tank divisions had an average of 340 tanks each. During the campaign in the West in the spring of 1940, their average number in the 10 tank divisions participating there dropped to 258 units, or 24%. From August 1940 to January 1941, the Germans carried out a profound reform of their mobile troops. Instead of the previous two tank regiments, only one was left in the state of the tank division. Due to this event, the number of German

tank divisions were doubled and increased to 20, while the total number of combat vehicles in them increased not so significantly. Therefore, the average number of tanks in 17 German tank divisions of the active army before the attack on the USSR fell by another 20%, this time to 206 vehicles [611]. One can often hear the opinion that by doing so the Germans significantly weakened the striking power of their panzer divisions, and the only reason for this was the lack of combat vehicles. Of course, the Germans constantly lacked the latest tanks. That is why they had to use in the first line both the R7.G and R7.P light tanks, obsolete by that time, and the captured Czech R7.35 (@ and R7.38 (0. At a meeting with the army elite on August 26, 1940 Gt Lehr agreed to leave one tank regiment in a tank division solely as a temporary measure, and in the future he hoped to sharply increase the rate of tank production, bring their number in the army to 26,700 units by the end of 1944, and return the second tank regiment to the tank divisions [612]. This plan of the Fuhrer turned out to be another utopia, but the temporary decision to reduce the number of combat vehicles in tank divisions proved its right to life. Moreover, as it turned out in practice, it turned out to be extremely successful. We must not forget that it was not accepted The main argument for the very possibility of such a reform was the results of a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the combat experience of the use of mobile troops in Poland and France. They showed that the tank divisions of the original organization were overloaded with tanks and suffered from a lack of infantry needed to support them. in b0yu.

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In addition, the massive introduction of new R7.Sh and R7.U medium combat vehicles into the troops, replacing light tanks with their weak armor and weapons, made it possible to actually significantly increase the strike and firepower of tank divisions, even taking into account the smaller number of combat machines in their composition. At the same time, the optimal ratio between tanks and motorized infantry made it possible to use this power most effectively.

To carry out Operation Barbarossa, four tank groups were formed from motorized corps, headed by experienced, enterprising, resolute, and most importantly, commanders tested in recent battles. Of no small importance was the flexibility of the organizational structure of the German tank forces. Their composition in the course of hostilities changed depending on the tasks assigned. In tank formations and units, in accordance with the current situation, combat groups of various configurations and numbers were also created, they included a variety of subunits. Comprehensive training and previously well-developed interaction skills allowed them to successfully solve the assigned tasks. It is very important that the artillery of the tank division had a mechanized traction, and its infantry and carts were transported by trucks. Thus, all units and units that were part of the formation

(subject to movement on roads), did not lag behind the tanks. This gave the division the opportunity to act independently, carry out swift and deep maneuvers and immediately engage in battle in full strength. This happened very quickly, for example, according to the standards, a German tank regiment completely deployed from marching columns to battle formations in no more than 25 minutes [613].

Unlike the Soviet tankers, the personnel of the German tank forces underwent comprehensive training and for the most part had fresh combat experience by 1941. To maintain continuous interaction between artillery and tanks, artillery observers of artillery regiments of tank divisions and attached artillery units during the offensive move

It is significant that by the middle of the war the USSR and its Western allies had reached a similar ratio of tanks and infantry in their tank formations, and yet they had much more tanks at their disposal than the Germans.

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They were on special combat vehicles, which were used as obsolete command tanks or armored personnel carriers. Following the attacking tanks, they detected targets in a timely manner and called in artillery fire. Target designation and adjustment of artillery fire in the German army was often carried out not only from the ground, but also from the air. The characteristic silhouette of the German short-range reconnaissance aircraft and spotter FV-189, nicknamed the "frame" for the two-beam structural scheme, was especially remembered by all front-line soldiers. His appearance, as a rule, was a harbinger of deadly shelling and air raids, corrected from above, and therefore the most effective.

A well-established system of maintenance of equipment, as well as the repair and restoration of vehicles that failed due to breakdowns and combat damage, functioned in the German tank forces. It began with each tank company, which had a repair section of 19 men, led by a non-commissioned officer, with two light 1-ton half-track tractors, two repair "flyers" and a truck with spare parts. The staff of the tank regiments included a repair company of 120 to 200 people, depending on the composition of the regiment and the types of tanks it was armed with. Workshops deployed on the basis of a regimental repair company no further than 70 km from the front line could simultaneously repair up to 30-40 tanks. Typically, repairs there lasted up to two weeks, although sometimes in the case of waiting for the necessary spare parts, this time was stretched to a month [614]. In addition, the Wehrmacht had separate repair and evacuation companies, which were in the reserve of the command of the ground forces, which were attached to the armies and army groups for use in the most important sectors of the front [615]. Repaired tanks were a significant source of reinforcements for the Wehrmacht throughout the war. Particularly significant

The repair company consisted of a headquarters, 2 repair platoons, an evacuation platoon, weapons and radio equipment repair sections, and a spare parts section. The company was equipped with 8 repair "flyers", 12 heavy 18-ton half-track tractors, 4 tank transporters, 2 self-propelled 3-ton cranes, 2 electric generators on trailers, metal-cutting machines, tools and fixtures, equipment for gas and electric welding, forge, etc.

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Their number was significant during the period of successful offensives, when the battlefield remained with the Germans, and the Germans did not interfere with the evacuation of the wrecked tanks.

Thus, taking into account the organizational structure and equipment, the high level of training of units and formations, the organization of interaction, command and control, technical and logistic support, the Wehrmacht tank forces turned out to be an extremely serious and dangerous enemy by the beginning of the war, with strong prerequisites for future success.

In connection with the saturation of the German troops with tanks, anti-tank weapons in the Red Army began to pay more attention. However, by the beginning of the war with weapons and ammunition of the pre-war Soviet tankers and anti-tankers, too, not all was well. The most common anti-tank weapon in the Red Army on the eve of the war was the 45-mm cannon. It was also used as a tank weapon. In the 1930s, such a caliber was considered quite sufficient to destroy any armored targets at real combat distances. This was actually true for a long time. Immediately after its birth in 1932, the "forty-five" had quite sufficient muzzle energy to reliably overcome the armor protection of the vast majority of tanks of its time. However, it is not the gun itself that strikes the enemy, but its projectile. The quality of an armor-piercing projectile largely determines the final result of the competition between it and enemy armor. And this quality, as it turned out, was very lame.

The first wake-up call sounded in the fall of 1939 during an experimental shelling of the German medium tank R7.Sh, which went to the Red Army in Poland. Contrary to all expectations, when fired from a distance of 400 m, Soviet 45 mm armor-piercing shells could not penetrate German 30 mm armor, although theoretically they should have done this even from 500 meters. Further tests in the spring of 1940 at the Kubinka training ground made it possible to establish that a large batch of 45-mm armor-piercing shells fired in 1936-1939 turned out to be defective. Due to a gross violation of the heat treatment technology, they became too brittle and shattered upon impact with the cemented German armor even before they had time to penetrate it. Thus, at the beginning

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Before the war, a significant part of Soviet 45-mm armor-piercing shells was only capable of penetrating the armor of German medium tanks from a short distance.

There was another problem with 76-mm armor-piercing shells: they were sorely lacking, since production in the USSR was established only in 1939 and they simply did not have time to accumulate sufficient stocks of them. The leading enterprise for the production of such shells before the war was plant No. 73 of the People's Commissariat of Ammunition in the city of Stalino (now Donetsk), which during the last pre-war peaceful month with a plan of 2Gtys. did not pass a single [616]. If the provision of the Red Army before the war with 45-mm armor-piercing shells reached 91%, then for 76-mm it was only 16%. During the discussion in the Defense Council of the question of the formation of anti-tank brigades of the RGK, it turned out that at the beginning of 1941 the artillery administration had at its disposal only a little more than 20 thousand rounds for 76-mm guns. At the same time, it was proposed to oblige the People's Commissariat of Ammunition to provide an equipment program with the necessary amount of 76-mm armor-piercing ammunition. But by the beginning of the war, for every 76-mm divisional or tank gun, on average, there were only 12 armor-piercing shells, or 15% of the need. In some border military districts, the situation was even worse. For example, in Zapadnoye Special, one 76-mm cannon had nine armor-piercing shells, and in Leningradsky even less than one. But for some reason, the Odessa Military District received 34 76-mm non-piercing armored shells for each gun of this caliber. Because of this, most divisional guns and T-34 and KV tanks were not provided with armor-piercing shells even for the minimum requirements [617]. And for other guns, except for 45- and 76-mm guns, there were practically no armor-piercing shells in the Red Army at that time. Thus, the lack of proper ammunition significantly reduced the ability of Soviet artillery to effectively fight German tanks.

In the Wehrmacht, even before the start of the campaign in the West, they knew very well that they would have to face numerous French and British tanks equipped with strong anti-ballistic armor. The main non-German anti-tank gun Pak 36 caliber 37 mm was unable to penetrate them. Work on significantly more powerful

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50-mm guns were carried out since 1938, but they managed to bring it to mass production only at the end of 1940 [618]. A couple of hundred Czech 47-mm anti-tank guns, put into service in the Wehrmacht, could not make a difference, because many thousands of them were required. To solve the problem, the development of new ammunition with increased penetration ability began at an accelerated pace in Germany. The work ended with undoubted success, although by the beginning of the offensive in France, new shells still

late. Their mass production began only in June 1940, and they were immediately sent to the front. As early as June 10, 1940, the 1st TD from the 1st TD mentioned the use of the new projectile Panzergapfen 40 [619].

The new sub-caliber projectile, equipped with a tungsten core, weighed almost half as much as a conventional armor-piercing projectile of the same gun. This allowed him to get a high initial speed of 1020 m / s. Due to the high kinetic energy and small cross-sectional area of the superhard core, this sub-caliber projectile, which received the R7rtg.40 index, pierced armor 64 mm thick at an angle of 30 degrees to the normal at a distance of 100 m. A conventional 37-mm armor-piercing projectile under the same conditions Viyakh could only penetrate 35 mm of armor [620]. The disadvantage of the new type of ammunition was the relatively rapid loss of speed after leaving the gun barrel. For this reason, they were recommended to be used at a distance of up to 500 m. In terms of armor action, they were also inferior to ordinary armored live shells, which, unlike them, were usually equipped with an explosive charge. But on the other hand, at short distances, sub-caliber shells proved to be very effective. There, their energy was enough to break through the armor, and for a fairly strong armor action. In the same 1940, they began to be mass-produced for all German tank and anti-tank guns with a caliber from 37 to 50 mm.

Not relying on ammunition alone, the Germans launched the production of new anti-tank guns, significantly exceeding the caliber and power of the 37-mm "mallet" '. By June 22, 1941, the German army had 1064 50-mm

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37-mm anti-tank guns were given the nickname "door knockers" by German soldiers due to their low efficiency.

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anti-tank guns PaKZ8 with a barrel length of 60 calibers [621]. Detailed characteristics of the Wehrmacht's tank and anti-tank weapons and their ammunition at the beginning of the war with the USSR are summarized in Appendix 11. For self-defense against enemy tanks that broke through into their positions, the Wehrmacht's main divisional guns — 1e.EN.18 105-mm howitzers — also received anti-tank shells. As can be seen from the above table, at short and medium combat distances, they could well penetrate the 45-mm armor of Soviet T-34 tanks, even taking into account its inclination. Thus, contrary to popular belief, from the very beginning of the war, German artillery had something to successfully destroy the armor protection of Soviet T-34 and KV tanks, especially at close range. And for fighting at long distances, the Germans widely used their famous 88-mm anti-aircraft guns and powerful 105-mm corps guns to fight the new heavy and medium Soviet tanks.

The German infantry was also well equipped with many

numerous and various regular means of close combat with enemy tanks. These included various mines, including magnetic, grenades, demolition charges, smoke and incendiaries. More importantly, the Germans were quite good at using them in combat. And the Soviet infantry was deprived of effective anti-tank weapons. The Dyakonov rifle grenade launcher, which was in service, was designed to fire only an anti-personnel fragmentation grenade. On the eve of the war, the question was raised about the development of a cumulative anti-tank grenade for it. Such a grenade under the index VPGS-41 was put into service only on October 13, 1941, but it was not very successful either. The Red Army had to use bundles of hand grenades and bottles of combustible mixture to fight the tanks.

Artillery of the pre-war Red Army was in the most favorable position in terms of material supply in comparison with other branches of the military. The total number of guns and mortars was 110,444 pieces, of which in the western military districts on June 22, 1941 there were 52,666 serviceable guns and mortars. Much attention was paid to the production of mortars. But at the same time

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there was an excessive enthusiasm for ineffective 50-mm mortars (34,622 units) [622]. The production of 45-mm anti-tank and 76-mm regimental guns before the war was gradually curtailed, since by the beginning of 1941 the troops were provided with these systems, respectively, by 96 and 98% of the mobilization requirement [623].

The artillery units of the border military districts were, as a rule, equipped with guns up to standard norms. For example, in the ZapOVO there were 10,296 guns and mortars, and in the KOVO there were even more - 12,604, and this is not counting 50-mm mortars. Such a number of trunks is quite appropriate

about the level of saturation of front-line formations with artillery in the most important operations during the Great Patriotic War. For example, in the Battle of Kursk, the Central and Voronezh fronts, which had an average of 9,000 guns and mortars each, solved the problem of repulsing the most powerful enemy strikes. In 1941, only anti-aircraft and powerful anti-tank guns were really lacking, which had a negative effect on the capabilities of the troops to repel enemy air strikes and his massive tank attacks.

The vast majority of Soviet artillery (92% of all barrels) was part of rifle, tank, motorized and cavalry units and formations, as well as fortified areas. The rest of the guns and mortars were brought together in the RGK unit: 61 howitzer and 14 cannon artillery regiments, [2 separate divisions of special power, nine separate mortar battalions and two separate heavy cannon batteries [624]. From February 1940 until the start of the war, the number of RGK artillery doubled. Artillery parts

RGKs were distinguished by noticeably better preparedness and combat ability compared to conventional ones. Their "Achilles' heel" was the lack of means of traction and transport, especially special ones. There were only 20% of regular tractors there, and for their replacement it was necessary to use ordinary agricultural caterpillar tractors ChTZ-60 and ChTZ-65, which could transport heavy implements at a walking speed of only 5 km / h. In conditions of maneuverable combat

In the military units of the rifle troops, more than half of the guns were horse-drawn.

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actions, it was impossible to fully realize the combat capabilities of the RGK artillery.

The well-known fighter against "official falsifiers" and "percent mania" M. Solonin does not miss an opportunity to once again accuse his opponents of an excessive desire to emphasize the unpreparedness of the Red Army in 1941 for an offensive. He believes that the Red Army was quite ready to deliver a preemptive strike against the enemy with personal forces, which could then be increased due to the mobilization carried out. All of Solonin's "proofs" cannot be given here, but it is impossible not to dwell on some of them. For example, he casts doubt on the allegedly inflated figures of the GABTU concerning the need for troops in means of traction, in particular in artillery tractors and tractors. He is trying to prove that there were enough tractors in the Red Army on June 15, 1941. At the same time, for some reason, he does not see other objects for towing, except for 107-mm, 122-mm and 152-mm caliber guns. Here is an example of his calculation for the corps and artillery regiments of the RGC. There are an average of 36 guns in a regiment, a total of 168 regiments (cap - 94, RGK regiments - 74). For greater persuasiveness, Solonin believes that they are all double-deployed (?!). Hence the need for 12,100 tractors. But the generosity of the author knows no bounds, and without batting an eyelid he asserts:

"In total, the maximum number of objects for towing is 20,000 units. On June 15, 1941 (here and below the figures are given according to the report of the head of the Main Armored Directorate of the Red Army) the troops already had 33.7 thousand tractors (and this is not counting the special artillery tractors ST-2, Komintern, Voroshilovets ", intended for towing heavy guns of corps artillery regiments and artillery regiments of the RGK). It would seem that there are no reasons for the disaster - there are one and a half times more tractors than guns. However, in MP-41 there is a figure of 55.2 thousand" [625].

But the then head of the GABTU of the Red Army, Lieutenant General of the Tank Troops Ya.N. Fedorenko was a competent specialist and knew his business conscientiously. The need of the Red Army for tractors on June 15, 1941, he cites

in the same table from which Solonin borrowed and

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rounded off the figure of 33.7 thousand tractors. It was 28,661 pieces for peacetime and 60,778 for wartime. The report notes:

"Among the total availability of tractors as of June 15, 1941, there are 14,277 obsolete tractors of the ChTZ-60, STZ-3 and Kommunar types, which are subject to seizure, since, due to their technical qualities, they cannot ensure the combat work of military units, especially artillery" [626].

Why they can't provide it is clear to every person who is more or less versed in this matter: the unacceptably low speed of towing and the inability to transport neither its ammunition nor its crew with the gun interfered. Such a hopelessly outdated technique had to be used not from a good life, but it was not enough. And Solonin pretends that Fedorenko knows better how many tractors the Red Army needed. The available number of tractors was more than enough only according to his calculations, but these calculations are based on frank ignorance of the matter. Solonin And he does not suspect that in artillery units it was necessary to carry 2 ammunition sets of ammunition, instruments and various kinds of accessories, and with them engineering, clothing and chemical property. There weren't enough cars for that. On horseback? Then it will be necessary to introduce into their staff, in addition to the art park (it is also supposed to have tractors), also an equestrian park.

For information: in the battery of the howitzer regiment of the RGK, four Voroshilovets-type tractors and two S-2 tractors for ammunition were placed for two guns, and only six, and four more three-ton trailers, which were also not enough. In total, 88 tractors were put into the RGK regiment for 24 guns according to the state of peacetime 8/44 [627]. At the same time, in the howitzer regiments of the RGK of high power, which were part of the covering armies, according to the wartime staff, approved on February 19, 1941, 112 tractors were relied on 24 203-mm howitzers. In similar cannon artillery regiments, according to the staff approved at the same time, 104 tractors accounted for 24 152-mm guns [628]. As we can see, tractors for these regiments required 4.5 times more than Solonin considers it necessary to allocate to them. A difficult situation with motorized means of transport and traction has developed in many artillery units of the Red Army. For example, in PribOVO, the state required 3399 tractors,

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as of March 5, 1941, 2,826 were available (573, that is, 17% incomplete), of which 520 needed urgent repairs (18.4%) [629].

By the beginning of the war, the shortage in the means of traction could not be eliminated. On April 23, 1941, it was decided to form

monitoring of 10 artillery anti-tank brigades of the RGK of a two-regiment composition. The deadlines allotted for their creation - by 06/01/1941, or 15-20 days from the moment the rifle divisions from which they were formed arrived, were obviously unrealistic. The brigades did not have enough people capable of mastering the duties of junior commanders and specialists. It is not surprising that all three anti-tank brigades of the RGC ZapOVO by June 13 were only 47-52% manned [630]. To cover the resulting shortfall in personnel, it was ordered to select and send to the western districts the most trained Red Army soldiers from the ZakVO (2000) and SAVO (1400). In the newly formed units, it was proposed to urgently create military schools. In order to fully cover the need for junior command personnel and specialists after the next autumn dismissal of old-timers, the release of school cadets was scheduled for December 1941.

Even worse was the situation with the staffing of brigades with traction means and mechanized transport. In each of them, according to the state, for 120 guns and 16 37-mm anti-aircraft guns, it was supposed to have 165 tractors and 718 vehicles [631]. On June 9, 1941, it was noted that the staffing of anti-tank brigades was slow, especially with regard to the provision of tractors, vehicles and ammunition [632]. According to the testimony of a former member of the Military Council of the ZapOVO A.Ya. Fominykh, the three anti-tank brigades formed in the district did not give a single tractor. This deprived them of mobility and jeopardized the fulfillment of tasks for their intended purpose. "And only recently it was allowed, at our request, to take tractors from the rifle divisions, and to transfer the artillery of the rifle divisions to horse traction (where tractors were taken). The conversion of tractors from rifle divisions took place in the month of June in the most energetic order, and by the beginning of the war the ITBRs were mostly equipped with tractors" [633].

But tractors were taken not only from artillery regiments of rifle divisions. Literally a day before the start of the war, on June 21, from

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The 301st Gap 6/m RGK, located in the camp at the Obuz-Lesna artillery range, was sent to Lida to military unit 3066 (the 8th anti-tank brigade of the RGK. - Auth.) 56 new STZ NATI tractors. It is not clear how the tractors were sent, apparently by rail (105 km). It is possible that they managed to reach their destination, but it is still not necessary to speak about the combat readiness, and even more so about the close togetherness of the units of the brigade. With rare exceptions, the hastily formed anti-tank brigades of the RGK did not justify the hopes placed on them with the start of hostilities.

Solonin consoles us: "<...> in the course of open mobilization already to | On July 1941, another 31,500 tractors were transferred from the national economy to the Red Army, so that the mobplan was completed for this category" [634]. He is not interested in when these tractors will reach the troops who have already entered into

battle. What, Solonin does not understand what is at stake? He personally understands: we are talking about the readiness of the Red Army to deliver a preemptive strike or to repel an enemy attack. Noah needs to "expose the official falsifiers" once again. But because of the lack of means of traction and vehicles, during the withdrawal of our troops, we had to abandon a lot of guns, as well as other weapons, equipment, ammunition and equipment.

So, in the "robbed" 30] 1st GAP, which was armed with 35 203-mm B-4 howitzers (another one was under factory repair), out of the 97 STZ-3 tractors that remained with him, received from the national economy in In 1939, before the Polish campaign, 22 tractors were sent to the 155th rifle division according to the order. When the regiment was advanced to the Snov region for further formation, due to the lack of serviceable tractors in the camp, three howitzers were left and disguised under guard, as well as 19 defective STZ tractors (they needed major repairs), 8 trailers, 94 vehicles of various types and part of the property [635]. The regiment's transport managed to lift only 895 rounds. The remaining 3718 shells stored in warehouses in Baranovichi (for two regiments) had to be blown up when leaving the city [636]. Deployment on the basis of this regiment with the announcement of the mobilization of the regiment of the second stage was disrupted. A similar situation developed in Dubno, where the 330th (number to be specified) GAP BM RGK was stationed. When

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mobilization, the same artillery regiment of the second stage was to be formed on its base, for which 24 203-mm howitzers were supplied, but no tractors were sent for it. According to the head of artillery of the KOVO, Colonel General N.D. Yakovlev, on June 22, this howitzer artillery regiment was among the first to be bombarded from the air. No secondary regiment was created on its basis [637]. On June 27, Halder was informed of the capture of large warehouses in Dubno. The Germans got a large amount of liquid fuel and gasoline, 42 210-mm mortars (the caliber of 203-mm howitzers, apparently, was determined by eye), 65 machine guns, 95 trucks, 215 tanks, 50 anti-tank guns, 18 artillery batteries! [638].

The situation with regard to the supply of ammunition to the troops was no better. The total amount of ammunition available at first glance was quite impressive. In terms of standard 16.5-ton wagons, 88 thousand of them were accumulated. This number included 64.2 thousand wagons, 5.5 thousand wagons of mines and 18.3 thousand wagons of ammunition for small arms and hand grenades. But due to the industry's systematic failure to fulfill plans for current orders, stockpiles of artillery and mortar rounds accumulated by the beginning of the war did not much correspond to the estimated need for them. So, according to the standards then in force, the ammunition available in mid-May should have been enough: small-caliber shells - for three weeks, medium and heavy caliber shells - for a month, mines - for half a month. shots for

anti-aircraft guns were available: 37 mm - for 5 days, 76 mm - for a month and a half, 85 mm - for 11 days [640]. These terms were clearly insufficient to complete the mobilization of industry and its transition to the mass production of ammunition, which fully met the enormous needs of wartime.

The volumes of ammunition production envisaged by the mobplan were not provided with the corresponding resources. In particular, they lacked the main component - gunpowder. Gunpowder production was almost

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During the first 20 days of the war, the troops of the South-Western Front lost 48 B-4 howitzers out of 192 that were available there at the beginning of the war [639].

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the bottleneck in terms of mobilization. The total estimated production capacity of the factories that produced the most massive pyroxylin gunpowder was 160.5 thousand tons per year. At the same time, according to the plan, it was necessary to have 236 thousand tons, or almost one and a half times more [641]. In addition, most of the Soviet gunpowder factories were located in the west of the country and were in danger of being put out of action in the event of an enemy offensive or air strikes.

However, the biggest drawback of the Soviet artillery, as, indeed, of other branches of the armed forces, was the poor professional training of personnel, including commanders. This is evidenced by order No. 059 of the People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko dated February 14, 1941:

"Checking <...> showed the following results:

PribOVO - on ground artillery, the command staff of four artillery regiments was checked, of which all received a poor rating; in anti-aircraft artillery, one regiment and five divisions were checked, all received a poor rating.

ZAPOVO - on ground artillery, the command staff of five artillery regiments was checked, of which four received a poor rating and only one was mediocre.

OOVO - on ground artillery, the command staff of three artillery regiments was checked, of which one received a bad and two mediocre ratings; one regiment and five battalions were checked in anti-aircraft artillery, of which only two battalions received a mediocre rating, the rest were bad.

<... > LVO - the commanders of three artillery regiments were checked on ground artillery, all received a mediocre rating" [642].

In the acts of inspections, as the main reason for the uncovered

shortcomings, as a rule, the poor organization of command training, low diligence of unit commanders and weak demands on subordinates were indicated. Most often, the order part ended with the imposition of penalties and the appointment of deadlines for the elimination of shortcomings. And the on-duty instructions to "ensure control", "increase responsibility", etc. they were obviously late: there was less and less time left before the start of the war.

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Cavalry. In the mid 30s. 32 cavalry divisions (including five mountain cavalry divisions) in the Red Army formed an independent branch of the military - the strategic cavalry. By the beginning of the war, its numbers had sharply decreased due to the reorganization of a number of cavalry formations into tank and motorized ones. Only nine cavalry and four mountain cavalry divisions survived, six of them, as part of three corps, were stationed in the western military districts. Each cavalry division included a tank regiment (64 light tanks), four cavalry regiments, horse artillery, anti-aircraft and artillery divisions and separate squadrons: communications, sapper, motor transport, repair and restoration, chemical protection and sanitary. As part of the mountain cavalry division, an armored squadron replaced a tank regiment, instead of an anti-aircraft division there was an anti-aircraft battery, and instead of a motor transport squadron, a motor transport company. The repair and restoration battalion was absent there [643].

By the beginning of the war, the cavalry formations were manned noticeably better than all the others in the Red Army - an average of 97% of the regular strength [644]. In general, the Soviet cavalry remained at the height of the tasks facing it and was capable of much more than the former dashing attacks with lava with swords drawn. Horses gave her decent mobility, and cavalrymen went into battle, as a rule, dismounted. Having similar tasks and comparable mobility with tank troops, cavalry divisions were planned to be used together with mechanized corps as part of mechanized cavalry groups. However, due to the presence of horses and the lack of anti-aircraft weapons, they were highly vulnerable to enemy aircraft.

Only one cavalry division survived in the Wehrmacht, the 1st. She became part of the 24th MK, which was part of the 2nd Panzer Group of Guderian. The division consisted of four cavalry regiments, a horse artillery regiment, an anti-tank battalion, a sapper and scooter battalions, a communications battalion and a convoy. Unlike the Soviet cavalry divisions, there were no tanks in it.

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Aviation was a branch of the army, the development of which Stalin always showed special concern. No wonder the pilots in the USSR at that time were called "Stalin's falcons." But after a test of strength at Khalkhin Gol, Stalin had to be disappointed to see that the state of affairs in the Air Force was not at all as rosy as it was portrayed by official propaganda. In a private conversation on November 7, 1940, he frankly admitted that, despite the victory over the Japanese, the Soviet aircraft "turned out to be lower than the Japanese ones in terms of speed and altitude." Moreover, Stalin said in plain text: "We are not ready for such an air war as is going on between Germany and England" [645]. He was referring to the famous "Battle of Britain", won by the British at the cost of extreme effort. The victory in the air essentially saved this country from Nazi invasion and once again confirmed the growing importance of aviation in modern warfare. Therefore, on the eve of the war, the Air Force in the USSR developed at a faster pace.

Aviation is also the best example of the "growing pains" that accompanied the rapid increase in the number of personnel and military equipment, as well as the re-equipment with new types of aircraft. Many thousands of pilots, navigators and mechanics were needed to man and maintain the new aircraft. In the middle of 1941, three academies and 100 aviation schools and schools were engaged in their preparation in the USSR. All graduates of these educational institutions were awarded officer ranks, while junior aviation specialists and air gunners were trained by completely different educational institutions. It occurred to someone from the authorities that such a number of officers was excessive, and on December 22, 1940, Timoshenko signed order No. 0362 "On changing the procedure for serving the junior and middle commanding staff of the Red Army Air Force" [646]. In accordance with it, all graduates of flight and technical schools and schools began to be awarded the title of "sergeant". But that's not all: pilots, up to and including flight commanders, who served less than four years, were transferred to the barracks, and their families were evicted from military camps. Instead of the previously used voluntary principle of staffing aviation schools, recruits began to be recruited there. All

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these measures, for obvious reasons, were extremely unpopular among the aviation personnel and did not at all contribute to raising their morale. Only two years later did the high authorities become convinced of the far-fetchedness and injustice of the new order and returned to the old system.

The huge number of combat aircraft in service with the Soviet Air Force was not supported by the corresponding number of crews trained for them. And if on average more than three-quarters of all aircraft were manned by combat-ready crews, then for aircraft of new types there were less than half of them, and for the latest bomber

movers - and even less, only a little more than a third¹. Thus, on paper, Soviet aviation looked much more impressive than it actually was. The outbreak of the war convincingly confirmed this.

It is impossible not to note the extremely poor conditions for basing aviation in the border districts. There, 1112 airfields were required to accommodate numerous Soviet aircraft. By the beginning of the war, only 617, or 55% of the needs, were equipped. By the end of the year, it was planned to build another 333 airfields. This task was carried out by 98 specially formed airfield construction battalions, whose forces, in fulfilling the plan, could only increase the provision of airfields for Soviet aviation in the west by the beginning of 1942 to only 85% of the required [647]. As a result, two air regiments were forced to crowd simultaneously at many airfields, which not only created numerous inconveniences, but also made it impossible to fulfill the order to disperse aviation. At the same time, some of them were located so close to the border that they were within the reach of German artillery fire. For example, at the airfields of Dolubovo, Chunev, Chernivtsi and Balti, located only 10-20 kilometers from the state border, there were 403 fighters, including 239 of the latest MiG-3s [648].

The real scourge of Soviet aviation in the prewar period was the high accident rate, which often accompanied

¹ Detailed data on the number of combat aircraft in the Red Army and the availability of their crews are given in Appendix 6.

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resulting in loss of life and destruction of expensive equipment. The mass release of pilots under accelerated training programs sharply worsened the combat readiness of the units in which they were enlisted. But they still needed to be retrained for new equipment, which had just begun to enter service. The level of flight skills of the crews of the western border districts is well illustrated by the following figures: if the vast majority of them were prepared for daytime flights in simple weather conditions, then less than 18% of the crews could fly in bad weather conditions. But the pilots were far worse prepared for night flights: only 19% of them were able to fly in the dark in simple weather conditions, and only 0.8% in difficult weather conditions. It is not surprising that in such a situation in the first quarter of 1941, 2-3 aircraft crashed daily in accidents and catastrophes [649]. Measures to reduce the accident rate were taken the most simple. Instead of eliminating its main causes, which were, first of all, the insufficient level of personnel training, the poor quality of materiel, and the poor organization of flights, it was decided to deal first with their consequences. The number of flight hours was cut for pilots, so for three months in 1941, PribOVO pilots flew

on average, only 15.5 hours, ZapOVO - nine hours, and KOVO - only four hours. But that's not all, they were allowed to fly only under simplified programs. For example, in 1941 fighters were prohibited from performing complex aerobatic maneuvers, in particular spins. Moreover, this prohibition continued to operate even in the first months of the war [650]. Such measures, although they reduced the number of people and aircraft lost in peacetime, did not at all contribute to the growth of the skill of aviators just on the eve of an unprecedented battle in the air.

Meanwhile, the Luftwaffe also suffered considerable losses as a result of accidents and catastrophes. So, for these reasons, in just eight months from | August 1940 to March 31, 1941 the Germans irretrievably lost 575 aircraft. At the same time, 1368 people from the flight crews were killed, 50 were missing and 804 were injured. Of these, 588 dead, 27 missing and 246 wounded served in combat units, and the rest suffered during their studies [651]. But at the same time

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It never occurred to the Germans to reduce the requirements for training programs and improving the flying art of their pilots. They were well aware that such actions would undoubtedly lead to a drop in the effectiveness of aviation operations and an increase in its losses during a real war. Therefore, for the most part, the crews of German aircraft were superior to Soviet ones both in individual skill, and in group flight, and in the ability to navigate, and in battle tactics. The vast combat experience of the Germans greatly increased this superiority. -

In the border districts of the USSR there were 57 fortified regions (UR), of which 41 were located in the west. An impressive figure, if you do not take into account that only 14 of them were completed by the beginning of the war. 13 western URs were erected in the period 1928-1937. In 1938-1939. the construction of eight more fortified areas began, and by the autumn of 1939 they managed to bring them to an average of 59% readiness, and only one was completed [652]. All of them constituted the line of defense that came to be known as the "Stalin Line". To better assess its scale, it is enough to say that as of June 1, 1941, it included 3279 long-term defensive structures, and another 538 were not completed [653]. These fortifications urgently needed completion and further improvement, but after the annexation of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, they were mothballed.

The border moved to the west, and there, at the beginning of 1940, the construction of a new defense line began, which received the title of "Molotov Line". The Soviet political and military leadership pinned special hopes on the URs being built along the new border and field fortifications equipped with troops. In the event of a timely occupation of their formations by covering armies, they could organize

low-level resistance to the enemy and gain time to advance to the threatened areas of forces of the second echelon of the districts. Although from the analysis of the actions of the German troops during the capture of the Belgian forts and bypassing the "Maginot Line" it was already possible to conclude that the construction of fortified areas on the new border was inexpedient and time-consuming. Famous American

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General D. Patton called the fixed fortifications a monument to human stupidity. The funds spent on them would have been better spent on improving the training and equipment of the troops. But the experience of fighting on the "Mannerheim Line" dominated the minds of the Soviet leadership and inspired him with an excessive idea of the impregnability of the URs.

Contrary to the theory and opinions of military experts, the front line of the fortified areas was unreasonably advanced to the very border. Apparently, political considerations in favor of the literally understood slogan - "we will not give up our land an inch", took precedence over operational ones. Although, for example, the command of the ZapOVO from the very beginning proposed to build fortifications at a distance of 25-50 km from the border [654]. Thus, a fundamental mistake was made from the outset, with far-reaching consequences. The thing is, the success of the defense of any line of fortifications depends on the readiness of its garrisons to take their places in time and meet the enemy fully armed. The military units interacting with them must also have time to advance to their positions. Therefore, long-term fortifications are usually built not on the border itself, but at a distance that makes it possible to create a foreground of sufficient depth in front of them. This area is covered by various types of barriers and military outposts. The time that the enemy has to spend on overcoming the foreground allows the defenders to fully prepare to repel his attacks.

In addition, in the first place, they began to build pillboxes, you moved forward. Thus, the construction of some bunkers in the Brest fortified area was carried out within a direct line of sight from the adjacent territory. It was not possible to create an echeloned defense, because the construction of structures in the depths has not yet begun. URs that looked menacing on paper were often only a rare chain of bunkers, often poorly camouflaged, without proper weapons and equipment, and an incomplete fire system. In this form, the URs did not represent a serious obstacle for the Germans. It was not difficult for them to destroy them with assault groups or simply bypass them. Moreover, they knew very well the locations of most of the Soviet border defensive structures, because in many cases their construction was carried out literally before their eyes.

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Enormous human and material resources were directed to the construction of the Molotov Line. In the spring of 1941, 285 sapper and construction battalions, 25 construction companies and 17 autobattalions, which numbered 130 thousand people, worked on the construction of fortifications [655]. In addition to them, to speed up the work, engineer battalions of many divisions and corps, not only from the border, but also from parts of the internal districts, were attracted there on an ongoing basis. Instead of combat training, they were constantly engaged in construction, and at the beginning of the war their formations were left without sappers.

It was not possible to fortify the entire border entirely, the URs had to cover about 30% of the strip of the western borders of the USSR. First of all, new fortifications were erected in the most probable directions of a possible enemy offensive. Particular attention was paid to the northwest. In 1941, the PribVO received about half of all funds allocated for defensive construction. For comparison, ZapOVO got half as much, and KOVO only 9%. This distribution of resources was influenced by the later dates for the start of the construction of missile defenses in the Baltic republics, which became part of the USSR several months later than Western Ukraine and Western Belarus. Due to the accelerated construction of fortifications in the northern section of the border, they sought to release forces from there to strengthen the grouping in the southwestern direction.

By the time the Great Patriotic War began, about 2,500 long-term firing structures (DOS) had been built on the Molotov Line, of which about 40% had artillery or mixed weapons, and the rest had only machine guns [656]. They were to be supplemented by field fortifications erected by troops. The new DOSs had improved protection, surveillance and life support systems, but the equipment and weapons they needed were sorely lacking. So, in the ZapOVO, by the beginning of the summer of 1941, 550 reinforced concrete structures were erected, but only 193 of them were armed [657]. To complete the construction, first of all, cannon and machine gun mounts, as well as loopholes, were required, therefore, part of the weapons was dismantled from the URs on the old border and transferred to the Molotov Line. But the long list of incomplete sets also included fans,

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electric motors, switchboards, boxes, hot water boilers and many other things necessary for the normal functioning of defensive structures.

Realizing that "the supply of weapons to the fortified areas under construction is unsatisfactory," Stalin on June 16 (six days before the war) signed another decree. It authorized the transfer to the new URs of 2,700 light machine guns from the emergency reserve of the rear units and another 3,000 light and 2,000 heavy machine guns from the mobile reserve of the Far Eastern Front. In the same document

a schedule was drawn up for the delivery of 45-mm cannon mounts, machine guns and periscopes for long-term firing structures to the URs, calculated before the beginning of 1942. It was planned to finish the production of sights a month later. And this despite the fact that the industry was allowed to accelerate the production of much-needed equipment through overtime work and a reduction in the production of spare parts and components [658]. But despite all efforts, there was not enough time to complete the Molotov Line. It was not possible either to complete the construction of all its planned structures, or to equip those already built with everything necessary.

But most importantly, the fortified areas did not have time to equip them with trained personnel. Very serious measures were taken to this end, but they were clearly too late. So, on June 4, 1941, at the highest level, in the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, the decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR "On fortified areas" was approved. According to it, for the newly erected URs, the formation of 13 commandants' directorates, 110 artillery and machine-gun battalions, 16 artillery and machine-gun companies, six artillery battalions, 16 artillery batteries, six separate communications companies and 13 separate sapper companies began. The regular number of these troops in wartime was set at 239,566 people, in peacetime - 120,695. Of these, only 45 thousand, according to the plan, entered the formation on July 1, 1941, and the rest - by October 1 [659]. But the garrisons of the new URs still needed to spend a lot of effort on mastering their complex equipment and eliminating its imperfections, knocking together subdivisions, working out interaction, studying the terrain, etc. and so on. There was no time for that...

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Engineering Troops. In the summer of 1940, the Engineering Directorate of the Red Army was reorganized into the Main Military Engineering Directorate (GVIU). He was given the task of quickly overcoming the backlog of engineering troops in technical equipment and special training. However, their training was skewed towards ensuring the offensive actions of the troops to the detriment of the defensive ones. Since they were going to fight on foreign territory, unacceptably little attention was paid to the issues of engineering support for troops in the defense. They thought more about the methods and means of clearing the area, rather than about the construction of mine-explosive barriers, including operational ones, in order to counter the advancing tank and motorized enemy troops.

In the 1930s, in the event of a sudden enemy invasion, special measures were thought out and carried out to prepare the territory in the border zone (the foreground of the fortified areas) in order to delay its advance. In particular, all the bridges were ready to be blown up: stockpiles of explosives had been stockpiled and pits prepared. During the inspection of the units guarding the bridges, their readiness for undermining was necessarily checked. But in the late 1930s, all these measures

were blamed on numerous "enemies of the people", recognized as wrecking and cancelled. With the establishment of a new border, measures began to be taken to prepare the bridges for destruction, but they were not carried through to the end. All requests and proposals from the troops on this matter to the General Staff remained unanswered. There were no warehouses with mine explosives and ready-made charges near important guarded bridges and other objects, no brigades designed to set up and overcome barriers, not even special battalions. Only small subversive teams and companies of special equipment remained in the engineering and railway troops [660]. With the outbreak of war, this facilitated the mass capture of bridges by the enemy and greatly contributed to his rapid advance into the depths of the defense of our troops. For example, in the very first minutes and hours of the war, in the offensive zone of Guderian's tank group, the Germans managed to capture in perfect working order four road and two railway bridges across the Bug. They even

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considered it necessary to emphasize that "not a single Soviet military commander could make an independent decision to destroy crossings and bridges" [661].

On the eve of the war, the engineering units that were part of the corps and divisions, as well as units of the army and central, were kept in a reduced composition. Even in the border military districts, they were only 40-65% staffed with middle and senior command personnel, and 30-80% with junior officers. Their organization and armament lagged behind the requirements of the time, and new equipment began to enter service with them only before the war itself. They were only half provided with engineering equipment, anti-tank mines - by 28%, anti-personnel mines - by 12%, minimum wage! - by 60%, and with barbed wire - by 32% [662].

The distraction for a long time of divisional and corps engineer battalions (about 70 from the western border districts and another 41 from the interior) for the construction of fortified areas had a negative effect on the level of combat training and combat readiness of engineering units and subunits. The situation was aggravated by the fact that many sapper units that fell under the first blow of the enemy on the border suffered heavy losses and were never able to join their formations. Subsequently, the lack of engineering equipment and ammunition, as well as the inability of the combined arms commanders to use the limited capabilities of the few engineer-sapper units, did not allow us to ensure the withdrawal of our troops that had begun and the timely occupation of rear lines by them. |

The underestimation by the Soviet command of the role of the engineering troops on the eve of the war led to the fact that the most important tasks of engineering support for the actions of troops both in the front line and in the operational rear were not fully solved.

military intelligence organization. Before the outbreak of hostilities, the bodies and subunits of the military intelligence of the western border districts were kept in a reduced composition. Their headquarters, shackled by instructions not to provoke the Germans,

! Inconspicuous obstacles against infantry.

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paid insufficient attention to the conduct of undercover, radio and aviation intelligence. In turn, the army headquarters, not having their own regular reconnaissance units, did little to organize reconnaissance by the reconnaissance subunits of divisions and to establish contacts with the reconnaissance agencies of the border detachments.

Meanwhile, G.S. Isserson, in developing his views, wrote: "<...> modern war begins before armed struggle" [663]. And the military intelligence agencies should be the first to intervene. In other words, the level of staffing of reconnaissance agencies and reconnaissance subunits, their equipment with the most up-to-date means and combat readiness must be substantially higher than the corresponding indicators of the troops, and the actions of reconnaissance officers must be several steps ahead of their actions. But the reports of the border guards and military intelligence officers in the last two days before the war about clear signs of the immediate preparation of the Germans for an attack were simply ignored by the Soviet command. It ineptly used the possibilities of intelligence in peacetime, limiting itself only to the development of plans. They described in detail - by the hour - the order from the mobilization of reconnaissance agencies, staffing them with personnel, weapons and technical means, determined the procedure for the collection and additional training of agents of operational points with the beginning of mobilization for reconnaissance behind enemy lines. For this, applications were submitted to provide them with foreign currency for three months of the war (German marks, as well as Polish zlotys, at least 300 per month per person), civilian clothing, as well as military uniforms and weapons of the German type [664].

However, the sudden invasion of the enemy led to the disruption, among other things, of plans for the deployment of reconnaissance forces and means. Information about the enemy had to be obtained already in the course of the unfolding battles. At the same time, due to the lack of experience, poor training of intelligence agencies and subunits in obtaining reliable information about the enemy, as well as poorly established interaction between various types of intelligence, it was not possible to organize a continuous collection of data about the enemy for a long time. Thus, the head of the intelligence department of the ZapF responded to all requests from the General Staff for data

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ground intelligence answered: "<...> for two days the headquarters of the front has no communication with the headquarters of the armies, and we do not receive any data from ground intelligence. Delegates were sent to the intelligence departments of the armies. For example, it was not possible to immediately establish the numbering and composition of the advancing enemy formations. And without reliable data about the enemy, it is impossible to make sound decisions and set missions for the troops. As a result, only on the 5th day of the war was the Soviet High Command able to draw the final conclusion that the enemy on the Soviet-German front was concentrating his main efforts on the western strategic direction.

In the Wehrmacht, the organization of intelligence was given paramount importance. Before the outbreak of hostilities, one of the main methods of obtaining information about opposing enemy groupings was to listen and intercept his radio communications. A very powerful radio intelligence service was created in Termania, which was organized and headed by the chief of communications of the German army from October 1934, General E. Felgibel. In 1935, the first five mobile motorized "radio interception companies" were formed. By 1938 there were already eight of them. The central body of the new system was the "Main Radio Interception Station", subordinated directly to Felgiebel himself and engaged in operational intelligence.

German radio intelligence began its work against the Soviet Union long before the start of the Great Patriotic War. After the Civil War, the former white officer Pyotr Novopashenny, an experienced specialist in the field of deciphering, went to work for the Germans. In addition, the German "Cipher Department" was able to closely get acquainted with the achievements of Polish intelligence, which managed to break Soviet codes during the war of 1920. Based on this knowledge, the Germans were able in the 20s and 30s to successfully intercept and read numerous Soviet military and diplomatic

' During the First World War, the Germans became convinced of the effectiveness of radio intelligence. It was based on stationary "radio interception stations" that were available in every military district in Germany.

? Strategic intelligence in the interests of the army was carried out by the so-called "Cipher Department".

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plomatic encrypted messages. The experience of intercepting Soviet radio messages was significantly increased during the war with Poland, where the Germans actively listened in on the conversations of the Soviet troops and headquarters during the entry of the Red Army into its eastern regions. Due to the low discipline of off-air Soviet radio operators and their non-compliance with the rules for ciphering radio messages to German radio specialists

The interception managed to significantly replenish their knowledge base about the Red Army and its communications system, which was very useful to them in the near future. I

During the Polish and French campaigns, the "Radio Interception Service" was successfully tested in action. The data obtained by her enjoyed the confidence of the German command. Taking into account the combat experience gained, the structure of the service was improved, it abandoned the rigid centralization of control. Headquarters of commanders of the radio intercept troops were organized in each army group, enjoying considerable independence in their actions. Subdivisions subordinated to them received greater independence. This made it possible to significantly increase the efficiency of their work: the obtained intercept data began to fall much faster directly to those who used it. On the eve of the German attack on the USSR, all 8 "radio interception companies" available in the Wehrmacht were concentrated in the east, which were equipped with a total of 250 receivers [665]. The equipment used ensured reliable interception of negotiations in the zone located west of the Desna and the Dnieper, in the Baltic states and the territory adjacent to the Finnish border. Such an extensive and powerful radio interception service did not exist in the USSR at that time. The few existing radio intelligence units conducted it only in the range of long and short waves. Listening to enemy transmissions in the ultra-shortwave range, which was widely used in tank units and subunits of the Wehrmacht, began only at the end of 1941. But the information obtained by Soviet radio intelligence with the outbreak of hostilities was not trusted by the high authorities (it is not always possible to confirm them in another way succeeded) and were not brought to the troops.

An equally important advantage in the organization of intelligence in the Wehrmacht was that its parts and subdivisions

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The divisions were well manned, equipped and deployed in advance, and their personnel had combat experience. In order to conduct reconnaissance in tactical depth, German tank divisions and army corps were given reconnaissance squadrons under direct subordination, from whose aircraft the most valuable information was transmitted to the command about the location, number and composition of enemy forces, as well as information about the state of the terrain, roads and bridges, through which they had to pass .. The Wehrmacht had well thought out ways to quickly transfer the obtained intelligence information to the troops. In addition to conventional radio communications, a system of prearranged signals was widely used, which pilots gave from the air to ground troops using multi-colored rockets or by dropping a written report (maps with printed conditions) placed in special cylindrical containers that contained sources of yellow smoke that allowed ground troops to they are easy to detect [666]. Aircraft could also mark with smoke bombs detected

enemy positions, his ambushes, which were often difficult to detect in time from the ground. As a result, advanced German units and subunits often received reconnaissance information from their aircraft earlier than the command of their formations. This allowed the German commanders to make decisions based on real knowledge of the enemy troops and the terrain, and on this basis to achieve maximum results with the least losses.

The organization of communications was one of the weakest points in front of the military Red Army. The development of signal troops did not keep pace with the rapid growth of the armed forces. Before the war, their units were also kept in peacetime states, and only after the start of mobilization were to increase sharply. Thus, the communications battalions that ensured the control of the armies were deployed into regiments. But there was an acute shortage of competent specialists for them. Apparently, therefore, parts and subdivisions of communication in many cases had long terms

': By June 1941, they had 416 short-range reconnaissance aircraft, of which 358 were operational [667].

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deployments than the connections they were supposed to serve. But even after mobilization, they were not able to fully ensure the command and control of the troops, since their material base did not meet the growing needs. This was especially true of radio communications. Even the General Staff and front departments were provided with radio stations for less than 35% of the staff, and the headquarters of the armies and corps - only 11%. The troops were noticeably better provided with radio equipment: divisions - by 62%, regiments - by 77%, and battalions - by 58%. However, a significant part of their equipment was not modern. At the front level, 75% of available radio stations have become obsolete, at the army level - 24%, at the divisional level - 89%, and at the regimental level - 63%. Traditional wired communications were also lacking. There were 78% of telegraph sets and 65% of field telephones [668]. For couriers, too, there was a shortage of the necessary cars, motorcycles and liaison aircraft.

The already difficult situation with communications was noticeably aggravated by the low quality of the equipment available. By the summer of 1941, most of the means of communication of the Red Army were already outdated and were not suitable for mobile warfare. They were unreliable and could not provide the necessary efficiency and uninterrupted transmission and receipt of information vital for the successful conduct of hostilities. This even applied to ordinary telephone wire. Its insulation did not provide the necessary tightness, so moisture that got on it, especially during rains, often led to interruptions in communication. And this was inevitable for field lines laid directly on the ground. And, of course, it could not be driven along the bottom of rivers, lakes, streams, canals and other waterways.

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In peacetime, wire channels of the civil People's Commissariat of Communications were widely used in military districts, which did not provide reliable command and control of troops. The threat of putting them out of action by enemy aircraft, the actions of his agents or sabotage groups was clearly underestimated. In order to increase the reliability of wired communications, the chief of staff of the PribOVO ordered from the first day the divisions entered their defense zones at the established signal to put up a specially assigned to the nearest communication centers

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nye teams from the separate divisional communications battalions. But this took a long time. Due to the suddenness of the German attack, it was not possible in many cases to take control of the communication centers. As a result of the actions of the anti-Soviet underground, wire communications in many directions were put out of action.

Unlike the signalmen of the Wehrmacht, their Soviet opponents were not equipped with either radio relay stations, or high-frequency telephone and voice-frequency telegraphy equipment, or VHF radio stations, or long-distance communication cables. The cipher business was somewhat better organized. In the headquarters of the Red Army from the division and above, machine encryption was used to encode the transmitted reports. At the operational-tactical level, small-sized disk encoding machines K-37 "Kristall" were used, at the operational-strategic level - M-100 "Spektr" encryption machines. A special technique made it possible to increase the speed of text processing by a factor of 5-6 compared to the manual method, while maintaining the guaranteed durability of transmitted messages. However, Soviet cipher machines were inferior in portability and ease of use to the German Enigma, also designed to automatically encode and decode text. And most importantly - there were too few of them, so in most cases the coding had to be done manually. Due to the need to constantly encrypt and decrypt the transmitted messages, the exchange over the air took too much time. This greatly slowed down and hampered radio communications and made radio communication inconvenient for everyday use.

In addition, many Soviet military leaders at that time simply did not trust radio communications and believed that it only unmasked their command posts. These fears were by no means unfounded. German radio intelligence units constantly monitored the airwaves and quickly spotted places with increased activity of radio communications. Then, according to the type and intensity of the used transmitters, they determined the hierarchy of communication nodes. Important control points took bearings and promptly transmitted their coordinates to their aircraft.

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At the beginning of the war, the main means of communication in the highest echelons of the Red Army were Bodo telegraph devices. They were too bulky and difficult to operate and therefore did not differ in ease of use, especially when relocating. This is understandable, because for their work it was necessary to lay wire lines capable of passing a stronger current than in ordinary telegraph wires. But at the request of Stalin, it was they who had to be used for direct negotiations between the Headquarters and the headquarters of the fronts and armies. The then head of the Main Directorate of Communications of the Red Army I.T. Peresyarkin testified:

"I.V. Stalin had great faith in the Bodo apparatus and in the impossibility of intercepting its work. Perhaps one of the experts convinced him of this. It was much more difficult to intercept the operation of the Baudot direct-printing apparatuses than the simplest Morse apparatuses, but it is possible. This was proved back in the period of the First World War, during a special check, which was organized by the Russian Naval General Staff" [669].

Soviet troops had to use means of communication that did not meet modern requirements, and even those were often not enough. Interruptions in communication, and even more so its complete absence, led to the disorganization of the troops, which already suffered from a lack of proper training, coordination and competent command. It was especially difficult under such conditions for insufficiently experienced Soviet commanders, who were not accustomed to independence and were used to constantly receiving orders for all occasions. When communication was lost, they often got lost and did not even try to take the initiative, waiting in vain for guidance from above. This picture was in striking contrast to the situation in which the German troops fought. They constantly kept in touch with each other and with their command and, if necessary, quickly received support from the ground and from the air on call. Marshal Budyonny had good reasons to say then: "The Red Army is strong, but communications will destroy it."

Transport. In the Red Army, well equipped by the beginning of the war with the main types of weapons and military equipment, the situation with the provision of troops with vehicles

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was completely unsatisfactory. The shortage of army vehicles was huge: on the eve of the war, the Red Army had only 36% of the vehicles from the wartime needs. The situation with special vehicles was especially difficult. Sanitary and staff vehicles were replaced by passenger buses and ordinary trucks, tank trucks - by trucks with

barrels at the rate of one truck with 6 barrels of 250 liters per tank truck. It was planned to compensate for the shortage of vehicles, at least partially, by mobilizing this equipment from the national economy. But it was impossible to find a replacement for special vehicles that were not in the national economy (water, oil, gas tankers, firemen, auto repair shops, etc.). The commanders of the units were asked to keep them incomplete until they were received from the industry. Thus, to complete the troops of the ZapOVO, 103 mobile auto repair shops (PARMs) of type "A" and "B" were required, which were available only in the MTS of the eastern regions of the BSSR (it was known in advance that 35 of them required overhaul and 49 medium ones) [670].

The fact that the calculations were largely built on sand was convinced by the experience of partial mobilization in 1938 and 1939. The heads of enterprises that were supposed to give away part of their mobilization equipment to the Warmia usually tried to get rid of the worst copies of it, because with the remaining machines they had to continue to work and fulfill the plan! It is not surprising that "the motor vehicles and tractors supplied to the Red Army turned out to be in very poor condition and completely unprovided with spare parts and rubber, <...> the operation of machines in the national economy has not been established, no one directs it (operation), nor has it been timely maintenance and refurbishment of "equipment intended for delivery to the army in the event of mobilization" [671]. The created commission was instructed to present a list of specific measures to correct the identified deficiencies. But it turned out to be impossible to solve such a complex problem in a short time. This was stated by Ya.N. Fedorenko in his report "On the state of provision of armored vehicles and property of the Red Army". He prepared him for a speech at the Main Military Council of the Red Army,

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dated June 25, 1941. The outbreak of war disrupted this meeting, but Fedorenko's report was preserved, and this is what was said about trucks:

"Count on covering the shortfall on these cars to us! due to the supply of mobilization from the national economy, as the experience of the Polish and Finnish campaigns has shown, it will not be possible, since a huge number of cars will arrive at the delivery points in poor technical condition and with worn out tires" [672]. .

Even in the event of the full implementation of plans for the mobilization of transport from the national economy, the provision of the Red Army with cars would not have reached even 68% of wartime needs. In this regard, the NPO raised the issue of increasing the production of trucks with a higher carrying capacity, trailers, special machines, tractors necessary for the army and directing them primarily to farms on

the territory of border districts [674].

In fact, everything turned out to be much worse. The armed forces expected to receive more than 447 thousand cars and about 50 thousand tractors from the national economy [675]. In fact, after the start of the war, by July 1, only 234,000 civilian vehicles and 31,500 tractors were delivered to the army [676]. It was especially difficult with transport in the troops of the western districts, which took upon themselves the first enemy strike. Not only did they not manage to get the lion's share of the civilian equipment due to them, but they also lost a lot of their vehicles as a result of the extremely unsuccessful start of hostilities for them. In the very first days of the war, a stream of complaints came from the troops, including those addressed to the chief military prosecutor, about the supply of vehicles from the national economy that required major and medium repairs. These accounted for up to 80% of the total volume of deliveries and only loaded the already overloaded iron

' We were talking about 3-ton ZIS-5 trucks, which had twice the carrying capacity compared to Gorky's "one and a half" trucks and therefore much more valuable. "Gases" then made up the majority of the fleet of vehicles of the Red Army. As of June 15, 1941, there were 117,415 of them, and ZISs - 75,803, or one and a half times less [673]. For comparison: most Wehrmacht trucks had a load capacity of 3 tons.

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road. Therefore, on July 5, the autotractor department received a request for additional mobilization from the national economy of 1000 vehicles of the best technical condition, including for communication: ZapF - 100, SZF - 208, SWF - 100, SWF - 211 [677].

The Wehrmacht in 1941 was far from complete motorization, but in terms of transport equipment, it undoubtedly significantly surpassed the Red Army. This superiority in the number of not only wheeled and tracked vehicles, but also the most ordinary horses is shown in Appendix 8. Thus, in 1941, the German infantry division was supplied with 1009 vehicles and 4842 horses [678], and in the Soviet rifle division - 558 vehicles. and 3039 horses [679], those. it was 1.6-1.8 times inferior to the contemporary German infantry division in all modes of transport. Therefore, the formations of the Wehrmacht, and not only tank and motorized, but also infantry, were much superior in mobility to the corresponding formations of the Red Army, including due to better organization of marches. This made it possible for them to quickly maneuver their forces and means, create superiority in forces and means necessary for success at the right time in key sectors of the front, maintain high offensive rates, and also ensure the supply of troops with everything necessary for combat operations.

But this coin also had another side. To supply your army with a regular number of vehicles in conditions

obviously insufficient own production, the Germans had to use all the more or less suitable assorted vehicles. The Wehrmacht simultaneously operated about 2000 different types and modifications of motorcycles, cars, trucks and tractors, a considerable number of which were mobilized civilian and trophy models with clearly insufficient cross-country ability and reliability for the level of Wehrmacht requirements. Their maintenance required a range of almost a million different spare parts [680]. The German repair units had to solve the extremely difficult task of maintaining the extremely diverse fleet of Wehrmacht vehicles in working condition in the conditions of bad roads of the USSR.

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The rear support of the troops was truly the "Achilles' heel" of the Red Army. The main reason for the constant interruptions in supply was accurately noticed by S.M. Budyonny in his speech at a meeting of the top leadership of the Red Army at the end of December 1940:

"I think that we talk a lot about the rear, but now we need to do it. First of all, we need people who are operationally literate and who know the operational rear very well, so that they can take a course on organizing the corresponding rear at the Academy of the General Staff. And now people don't know how to organize the rear" [681]. R

He also mentioned the Wehrmacht there: "<...> although they write about the German army, when it operated in the east, its rear acted as a good chronometer; I doubt it." Budyonny doubted on the basis of his own experience, because he saw with his own eyes the terrible confusion with the supply during the recent campaign of the Red Army in Poland. Therefore, it was difficult for him to imagine that this matter could be put in any other way. Unlike the Red Army, the German army always paid due attention to the organization of logistic support. The second most important officer in the directorates of German units and formations, after the chief of staff himself, was engaged in logistics. An indispensable requirement for people appointed to this position at the divisional and higher levels was a diploma from the Academy of the General Staff.

In the Red Army on the eve of the war, various rear services were divided and had no centralized control. In peacetime, the rear units and rear services were kept in a reduced composition, which amounted to no more than 30% of the wartime staff. According to the plan, the front and army rears were to fully deploy only on the 15th day of mobilization. Meanwhile, directly in the troops there were stocks of material resources for only three days, and food for 5-6 days. Mobilization stocks were designed for 3-month combat operations [682]. At the same time, fuel supplies in the Western military

districts were minimal due to a lack of warehouse space and storage capacity. In mid-May 1941, there was B-78 gasoline for only 10 days of the war, B-74 gasoline for a month, B-70 gasoline for 2.5 me

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a month, gasoline - for 1.5 months, and diesel fuel - for a month. The main stocks of fuels and lubricants intended for supplying troops in the west were stored in the depths of the country [683].

Only 50-60% of the staff of the military rear units were equipped with cars. The lack of transport required the command of the border military districts to move the warehouses available there closer to the border, so that in the event of a war they would be at hand. As a result, 30 million shells and mines ended up in the danger zone and were mostly lost at the very beginning of the war [684]. Due to the shortage of transport, non-deployed rear areas, and general confusion, up to 70% of food supplies, fodder, clothing and other property concentrated along the western borders suffered the same fate [685]. As a result, the troops had to fight in the conditions of an acute shortage of materiel, especially ammunition and fuel.

The rear service of the Wehrmacht also faced the most difficult task of providing with everything necessary a multimillion-strong army advancing simultaneously on a front many hundreds of kilometers wide. In addition, the width of the railway track in the USSR differed from the European one. This created big problems with the transfer of large volumes of cargo across the border and significantly slowed it down. But on the side of the Germans there was a system of material support for large-scale military operations of their troops in various regions that had been repeatedly tested in practice. Her uninterrupted work became one of the cornerstones on which the successes of the Wehrmacht were built. And during the border battles, the short supply arm allowed the Wehrmacht's road transport to quite successfully cope with the task of timely delivery of the necessary cargo to the army in the field. For this purpose, a significant part of the German trucks were concentrated at the disposal of the high command and used centrally.

Of considerable importance for the outcome of an armed struggle is the preliminary preparation of the infrastructure of the future theater of operations, its adaptation in advance to the specific needs of the troops who are to fight there.

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And in this regard, a significant advantage was for

Germans, who paid special attention to this issue. An important role here was played by the successful implementation of the directive "Construction in the East", developed by the OKW in August 1940. By the end of May, all the work envisaged there was completely completed. Up to 350 airfields and 210 landing sites were prepared for the reception of aviation, and 53 aviation depots were built. In total, the Germans prepared 185 different warehouses, of which 45 were for ammunition, 65 for fuels and lubricants, and 13 for food. per day. This made it possible to transfer up to seven divisions to the Soviet border daily [686].

Things were much worse on the Soviet side of the border. The gain in time of a year and a half after the transfer of the border to the west, which is so much talked about, was far from being fully used. Work on the preparation of the theater was still in full swing. The most serious problem was the unacceptably low capacity of railways in the west of the USSR. The possibilities for concentrating troops in the very direction where, according to the plan, the main forces of the Red Army were deployed, were analyzed at the headquarters of the KOVO no later than December 1940 and set out in a note on the plan for the deployment of district troops for 1940. In order to better imagine the scale of this deployment, suffice it to say that the total length of the Southwestern Front reached 600 km. Rail transport was the only way to quickly move enough troops to the border in the event of a war. But when trying to plan the necessary military transportation to its full potential, the problem arose of the low capacity of the railway network in the border areas. It is well described in the above note:

'To the rocade line!' Korosten, Shepetovka, Proskurov are suitable - 6 highways with a total capacity of 270 pairs

Rokada is a road in the front line, running parallel to the front line. It serves to maneuver troops and materiel.

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trains, taking into account the optional' 180-200 pairs. From this road to the west there are 5 highways with a capacity of only 90 pairs of trains, and taking into account the elective - 60 pairs.

This means that d0 of the line Korosten, Proskurov can be brought up daily by 4 divisions, and then only 1-1.5 divisions. When calculating for 1.5 divisions per day, it is required to transport 60 conditional divisions by rail (45 rifle divisions, 2 tank brigades, 1b ap RGK, 35 air bases and logistic institutions) - 45 days from the start of the arrival of echelons , i.e. from 8-10 days of mobilization.

On the territory of the KOVO up to the line Korosten, Proskurov, all conditional divisions can be transported on the 23rd-25th day of mobilization.

The conclusion suggests itself that it is necessary to unload 2.5-3 divisions on the Korosten-Proskurov line and then lead them on a march.

The distance from the line Korosten, Proskurov to the state border is 350-400 km, it will take 13-14 days to overcome it. At the same time, it can be expected that [on] the 35th-40th day of mobilization / [s] all parts of the front can be deployed on the state border line" [687].

As we can see, to the west of the border of the old border, the capacity of the Soviet railways in Ukraine fell exactly three times. As a result, for the full concentration of troops at the new border, it took as much as 53-55 days after the announcement of mobilization. Of these, 20-22 days were spent on overcoming the last 350-400 kilometers in conditions of an acute shortage of railway lines. In order to somehow reduce this period, some formations would have to make a foot march lasting almost two weeks to arrive at their destinations. But even with this forced measure, it took from 43 to 50 days for the full deployment of troops near the border.

But the enemy was by no means going to wait for the complete completion of the deployment of the Red Army. According to the chief of staff of the KOVO, "German-Italian troops for action

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Railway elective - a reserve included in the schedule of the road in the amount of 15-30% of its maximum capacity, necessary to compensate for the irregularity of traffic, peak loads and all sorts of unforeseen delays.

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against the Southwestern Front can be concentrated on the 15th day from the beginning of the concentration" [688], i.e. three times faster than the Soviet ones. Thus, it is impossible not to admit that the urgent demands of the military to radically expand and modernize the railway network in the border areas of the country were quite justified. Work in this direction, of course, was carried out. But they were poorly provided with the necessary materials and especially mechanisms. With the established rate of mechanization of earthworks of 60%, in fact, manual labor prevailed there. Only 2% of these works were mechanized [689]. Thus, by the summer of 1941, it was not possible to eliminate the unacceptable lag in the capacity of railways in the west of the USSR from that of railways located on the other side of the country's borders.

From the Soviet side, less than half of the trains per day could still be delivered to the borders than from the enemy side. This is clearly shown in Table 7.4:

Table 7.4

RAILWAY CAPACITY ON THE WESTERN BORDER
OF THE USSR

Direction - Steam |
Correspondingly Section of the border of trains |
singing a
day sy =
North
Finland

West Northern Poland and East Prussia | 192

ü Order 20
west
216
KOVO 132
Southwest 1:2.77
Southern Poland and Hungary 366
Gotha -
Southwest
Romania

USSR
Total 1:2.23
Germany with allies 992

Source: [690].

512

1:1.65

127

1:2.21

=nf

rinif

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1:3.25

It must not be forgotten that the low capacity of the railway network in the border areas of the USSR prevented not only the operational transfer of troops, but also their supply with everything necessary for conducting intense hostilities. First of all, this applies to offensive operations. The troops leading them need increased supplies, especially fuel and lubricants and ammunition. The unpreparedness of the Soviet railways to fully meet the material needs of the army west of the old border line is another argument that Stalin did not plan any attack on the Germans in the summer of 1941.

As a conclusion, it can be stated that by the summer of 1941, the Wehrmacht was fully prepared for the next blitzkrieg - exactly the type of war that Hitler was going to impose on the Soviet Union. [Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, Commander-in-Chief of the German Land Forces, after inspecting troops in the east on the eve of the war on June 13, 1941, expressed his impressions of the trip to the Chief of Staff of the OKH, General Halder:

“The overall impression is encouraging. The troops are in good condition. All issues related to the preparation of the operation are generally well thought out” [691].

Brauchitsch had good reason to be pleased with his soldiers and officers. Everything went according to plan, as in preparation for previous campaigns. Continuous quick and stunning military successes inspired all German soldiers, from the soldier to the commander in chief, with boundless self-confidence. The victory over the USSR was to be another milestone on the path of the Third Reich to world domination.

To draw such a conclusion regarding the readiness of the Soviet troops for a new type of war does not raise a hand. Despite the enormous work on military construction done in the USSR in the prewar years, the Red Army was still inferior to the Wehrmacht in almost all quality indicators. She was not prepared for the war she had to enter.

Chapter 8

DID STALIN INTEND TO ATTACK
GERMANY IN 1941?

After the successful completion of the campaign in the West, the German command already in July 1940 will begin the transfer of the released troops to the east. By the end of this year, 34 German divisions were drawn to the borders of the USSR, of which 6 were tank divisions. They were merged into Army Group B with three armies. Some of these forces were deployed in the Balkans, and by the beginning of February 1941, 29 German divisions remained near the Soviet borders, including two tank divisions stationed in Romania under the pretext of training and training the Romanian army. In fact, they were assigned much more important tasks: to protect the oil production areas from possible capture or destruction, to be ready to act from the territory of Romania together with other German and Romanian forces, providing the latter with the necessary support [692].

Since February, the strategic concentration of Wehrmacht forces, allocated for the invasion of the USSR, began. The bulk of the troops were transported by railroads. For the purpose of secrecy, military transportation began at a minimum pace - 12 railway echelons per day. From March 16, it was supposed to double, and from April 11 to reach 48 echelons per day [693]. Only a month before the start of the war, the pace of the transfer of troops was supposed to reach a maximum. However, the initial plans were adjusted in connection with the forced diversion of forces for aggression against Yugoslavia in April 1941. At the final stage, it was planned to eliminate the backlog that had accumulated earlier. Formations and units of the Luftwaffe were also concentrated near the borders of the USSR sequentially, in 2 stages. From February to May 1941, support units and rear services were the first to go forward. From May 22 to June 18, flight formations were to advance to the bases they had prepared.

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Such large-scale preparations for aggression, which were in full swing on the borders of the USSR, could not but attract the attention of the Soviet command. Constant reports of the transfer of more and more German units and formations to the border regions of the General Government incontrovertibly testified that a group of troops was being concentrated there, the appearance of which did not fit the explanations of the German leadership through diplomatic channels. It would be strange if Stalin did not feel the concentration of an army of several million people on his border. Being a fairly experienced politician, he certainly felt that the danger of war was inexorably approaching, and prepared for it. An important place in this training was given to raising the morale of its fighters and commanders. In his pre-war public speeches, Stalin constantly praised the Red Army and the results it was able to achieve in military conflicts. So, in the closing speech at the Meeting of the commanding staff on the collection and generalization of the experience of military operations against Finland under the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks on April 17, 1940, he stated:

"We defeated not only the Finns - this task is not so big. The main thing in our victory is that we defeated the technique, tactics and strategy of the advanced states of Europe, whose representatives were the teachers of the Finns. This is our main victory" [694].

Stalin could not fail to realize that this statement of his hardly corresponds to reality, because the Red Army did not smash the equipment, tactics, and even more so the strategy of the advanced states of Europe in the "Winter War". The lion's share of Finnish technology was by no means modern, and the Finns used well-known tactics, only skillfully adapting it to the specific conditions of the theater of operations. They just fought much more skillfully than the Red Army. But the leader, apparently, decided to encourage his commanders and restore their self-confidence, which was greatly shaken by humiliating failures and heavy losses. His speech at the graduation of students of military academies in the Kremlin on May 5, 1941 was also an attempt to raise morale

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red commanders and instill in them the confidence that they are fully capable of beating the German army when necessary. Therefore, he tried to publicly belittle the dignity of the Wehrmacht:

"From the point of view of the military, there is nothing special in the German army in tanks, and artillery, and aviation.

A significant part of the German army is losing its ardor, which was available at the beginning of the war.

In addition, boasting, complacency, arrogance appeared in the German army. Military thought is not advancing, military equipment is not only lagging behind ours, but America is beginning to overtake Germany in terms of aviation! [695].

At the same time, Stalin did not particularly bother himself with proofs of his words, calculated on people who blindly trusted him. But, soberly assessing the insufficient ability of the Red Army to resist the Wehrmacht on an equal footing, he did everything possible to delay the outbreak of war with Germany. To eliminate the major shortcomings of the Red Army, which were so clearly manifested in the Finnish war, to carry out the planned reorganization of the armed forces and re-equip them with new equipment, a lot of time was required, which had to be won. Time was definitely working for the USSR at that time, which led the rearmament of the Red Army with new equipment, developed the military industry and strengthened its western border.

Unfortunately, the Soviet command, when developing plans for the strategic deployment of the armed forces, did not fully take into account the experience of the amazingly quick defeat of Poland in 1939 and the Anglo-French troops in 1940.

chief of staff of PribOVO Lieutenant-General P.S. Klenov at the December meeting of the highest command staff of the Red Army self-confidently stated:

"I recently looked through Isserson's book *New Forms of Struggle*. Hasty conclusions are given there, based on the war of the Germans with Poland, that there will be no initial period of war, that the war is now resolved simply by the invasion of ready forces, as was done by the Germans in Poland, who deployed one and a half million people.

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There is no exact transcript of Stalin's speech at a reception in the Kremlin on May 5, 1941. The fragments presented have been reconstructed from individual surviving records.

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I consider such a conclusion to be premature. It can be allowed for a state like Poland, which, having become arrogant, lost all vigilance and which had no intelligence of what the Germans were doing during the months of concentration of troops. Every self-respecting state, of course, will try to use this initial period in its own interests in order to find out what the enemy is doing, how he is grouping, what his intentions are, and to prevent him from doing this" [696].

Apparently, Klenov did not understand the meaning of Isserson's evidence and overestimated the capabilities of Soviet intelligence, which, as he believed, would always be able to reveal the aggressor's preparations for an attack in a timely manner. Proceeding from this, he raised the question of the possibility of organizing a special kind of offensive operations in the initial period of the war, calling them "invasion operations" aimed at inflicting a preemptive strike on the enemy, whose armies "have not yet finished with concentration and are not ready for deployment." Supporters of the preparation and delivery of a preemptive strike against Germany often refer to this speech of his.

In this regard, I would like to remind the readers once again how plans for an attack on the USSR were developed in the Wehrmacht high command, how all possible options for the actions of the troops were considered, how different points of view on the development of the first operations were taken into account, even by persons who were by no means of the first rank. At the same time, the ranks and positions of the authors of fresh ideas did not play a special role. Thus, when discussing the cardinal issue of the composition of the invasion army, Lieutenant Colonel von Lossberg's proposal to create not two, but three army groups was accepted.

In the Red Army, everything was adjusted to the opinion of the senior commander, whom not everyone could dare to criticize. But the decisive word always remained with Stalin, who was called the "Master" among those close to him. The same situation has developed in the development of the theory of armed struggle. It developed on its own, but in practice

'Fate P.S. Klenov was tragic: on July 1, 1941, he was dismissed from the post of chief of staff of the NWF, on July 11, he was arrested, and on February 23, 1942, he was shot without trial, along with a large group of generals and leading workers of the military industry [697].

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The work took into account one, unified point of view, approved by the highest authority, and no options. For example, V.E. Zvyagintsev! cites a statement typical of those days (only those?) Shchadenko, who in 1935, being deputy head of the Military Academy. Frunze forbade the course of lectures on the theory of strategy, saying: "What else is strategy? Comrade Stalin is personally involved in the strategy" [697]. So, nothing more, nothing less...

They did not listen to the opinion of a prominent military theorist, head of the Department of Operational Art of the Military Academy of the General Staff G.S. Isserson, the same one criticized by Klenov. The possibility of a sudden attack by the enemy was recognized, but only in words, no measures were taken in practice to prepare for repelling such an attack, especially by large forces.

In April-May 1941, only the troops of the covering armies were in the border zone, the main forces of the districts were located in the depths. As new data were received on the massive deployment of enemy troops near the border, it became obvious that in the event of a surprise attack, the capabilities of the covering armies would not be enough to fend off the blow of large German groups. In connection with this, the Soviet government and the military leadership have taken some steps to strengthen the defense of our western borders. As early as March 8, 1941, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks approved the decision of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR on conscription from May 15 to October 20 for periods of 30 to 90 days 975,870 conscripts. At the same time, employees of key defense industries were exempted from fees: the aviation, tank, shipbuilding and chemical industries, as well as the people's commissariats for weapons, ammunition and communications. Due to the call for military training camps

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Zvyagintsev Vyacheslav Egorovich, born in 1954.
in the Kursk region. In 1979 he graduated with a gold medal from the military law faculty of the Military Institute of the Ministry of Defense. In 2000-2006 - Deputy Chairman of one of the federal military courts. From 2006 to the present - Head of the Analytical Department of the Supreme Arbitration Court of the Russian Federation. PhD in Law, Colonel of Justice in reserve. Acting State Counselor of Justice, 3rd class. Author of more than 60 publications on legal issues, as well as several books on the history of military justice.

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formations of the western and parts of the internal military districts were replenished with personnel. Additional people were received by a number of units of the Air Force, Air Defense, artillery, engineering troops, communications and logistics. 57,500 horses and 1,680 motor vehicles for a period of 45 days were also attracted to provide fees [699]. Compared to the needs of the Red Army, this was only a drop in the ocean. Therefore, even divisions replenished with fighters and commanders still had a large shortage of vehicles, mechanized traction and horse composition. The missing cars, tractors and horses were to be delivered to the troops from the national economy only after the announcement of mobilization. Thus, in the conditions of the growing threat of attack right before our eyes, the measures taken by our side were clearly not enough.

German intelligence established the strengthening of our grouping in the theater of operations. In the intelligence report of the Department of Foreign Armies "Vostok" on March 15, it was noted:

"1. Partial mobilization is underway, probably four ages will be called up. Its scale is difficult to assess accurately, since the Red Army was partially mobilized over the course of 18 months. It is impossible to say whether the existing units are being replenished to full wartime staff or new divisions are being formed.

2. Troops of all branches are moving out of the Moscow Military District in the direction of Minsk-Smolensk; in the Baltic states, troops are moving westward: the forces of the Red Army are being transferred to the western border.

3. In addition to complete blackout orders for some small towns, air raid drills and blackout drills are being conducted in major cities.

4. The "psychological warfare" is on the rise. The civilian population often talks about the impending war, sometimes with enthusiasm, sometimes with anxiety. Officer families from the border regions are sent to the interior of the country" [700].

In the next intelligence report of March 20, in particular, it was noted that starting from March 10, infantry and tank units were sent to Lithuania by rail. On the central

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section, according to unconfirmed reports, five new divisions and a mechanized brigade appeared. New corps administrations were also identified there. In the south, it was about seven rifle divisions, five mechanized brigades and four corps headquarters. According to the conclusion of the Germans themselves, all this did not go beyond the usual defensive preparations, but did not

also included the possible intention of the Red Army to conduct a partial offensive operation against Rumania in the area of the lower reaches of the Prut [701]. However, rail transportation in connection with the ongoing summer gathering of the Red Army reserves was directly mentioned in the well-known TASS report of June 13, 1941.

On April 4, Halder noted in his diary:

"<...> the number of Russian ground forces in the European part of Russia should be considered larger than it has been assumed so far. (This has long been claimed by the Finns and the Japanese.) It is assumed that the Russian troops number 171 rifle divisions, 36 cavalry divisions and 40 motorized mechanized brigades.

The newly formed tank corps, consisting of three divisions, is apparently deployed in the Leningrad region" [702].

It is quite characteristic that this message did not cause any alarm in the German leadership. The Germans did not consider the Red Army a serious enemy capable of causing them major trouble. This is clearly demonstrated by the report "On the Political and Moral Stability of the Soviet Union and the Combat Power of the Red Army", prepared by the Vostok Department of Foreign Armies for the first day of 1941:

"Commanders of all levels in the near future will not yet be able to quickly command large modern formations and their elements. Both now and in the near future, they will hardly be able to carry out large offensive operations, use the favorable situation for swift strikes, and show initiative within the framework of the general task set by the command.

Troops that have a certain merit in terms of numbers and firepower will fight bravely. But the requirements of modern offensive combat, especially in the field of interaction of all

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military branches, the mass of soldiers does not answer; a lone fighter will often lack his own initiative. In defense, especially prepared in advance, the Red Army will prove to be enduring and stubborn, and will be able to achieve good results. The ability to withstand defeat and to offer passive resistance to enemy pressure is especially characteristic of the Russian character.

The strength of the Red Army lies in a large number of weapons, unpretentiousness, hardening and courage of a soldier. The natural ally of the army is the open spaces of the country and impassability.

Weakness lies in the sluggishness of the commanders of all

degrees, attachment to the scheme, "<...> fear of responsibility and a widespread lack of organization" [703].

With regret, it must be admitted that the shortcomings of our army, especially with regard to the characteristics of the command cadres, have been noticed quite accurately. The Germans had no reason to fear such an enemy. Moreover, the concentration of Soviet troops on the western borders objectively played into their hands. It was on this that the German command was counting, planning to defeat the main forces of the Red Army in the border battle. In the OKH, on this occasion, they recalled the Visigoth king Alaric, who, in response to the threat of the Romans to put up a large army against him, answered their ambassador: "The thicker the grass, the easier it is to mow." It is no coincidence that the German side has never presented any claims to the Soviet Union in connection with the redeployment of troops to the border.

On May 25, 1941, a significant event took place: Hitler warned the OKW that within the next few weeks preventive measures were possible on the part of the Russians, therefore it was necessary to provide reliable defense against them [704]. What prompted the Fuehrer to this, at first glance, an illogical act? Let's remember the situation at the time. The final deadline for the attack on the USSR was set on April 30th. On May 22, exactly one month before the start of Operation Barbarossa, the penultimate stage of the transfer of Wehrmacht troops to the Soviet borders began, while the pace of military transport more than tripled. At the same time there

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German aviation also began to relocate. Events developed in full accordance with the carefully thought out and detailed German plans. No external causes had any noticeable effect on him. It is clear that Hitler was simply exaggerating in search of at least some justification for his perfidy. After all, he was going to violate, without any reason, both the non-aggression pact of August 23, and the treaty of friendship and border with the Soviet Union of September 28, 1939.

Without writing anything more convincing, the Fuehrer officially used this far-fetched pretext of concentrating Soviet troops on the German border to justify his aggression against the USSR. The note handed by the German ambassador to the Soviet government at 5:30 am on June 22, 1941, when bombs and shells were already raining down on our soil, formulated numerous claims against the Soviet Union. But the most important of them was the already familiar false accusation:

"<...> The Soviet government, contrary to its obligations <...>, concentrated all its troops on the German border in full combat readiness. Thus, the Soviet government violated the treaties with Germany and intended

reno to attack Germany from the rear, while she is fighting for her existence. The Fuehrer therefore ordered the German armed forces to counter this threat with all the means at their disposal" [705].

To substantiate the "claims" against the Soviet Union, the entire powerful apparatus of the Goebbels ministry was involved. And V. Rezun, who accused in the book "Icebreaker. Who started World War II? Stalin in deciding on a preventive war against Germany, only developed and supplemented the fabrications of the Nazi leadership with "fresh" facts. Some of them he pulled, taking them out of context, others he literally pulled by the ears, not disdaining to distort them, and some he simply invented. At the same time, from the statements of the participants in the battles of the initial period of the war of various ranks, he used only what works for his version of events, deliberately discarding the rest.

The book "Icebreaker" appeared in Germany in the spring of 1989, and then was published in England, France, Canada, Italy and Japan.

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Serious scholars in the West, including Britain and Germany, have largely ignored the writings of the Russian defector. But Rezun does not write for them! He composes primarily for readers who are far from military history and technology. The appearance of this book of his in 1992, and then other works in Russian, caused a much greater resonance! Rezun deftly took advantage of the fact that our people had long ceased to believe the official history, which was changed over and over again to please each new leader. Yemu managed, using the mistakes and direct manipulation of some "venerable" Soviet historians, to win some authority and popularity among Russian readers. During the years of perestroika, when the general public became aware of many documents that were previously hidden in the archives and refuted the official Soviet version of events, this was not difficult.

Rezun's supporters and followers (they have already been assigned the conventional name - "Rezunist") picked up his inventions, already referring to documents introduced into scientific circulation recently. A broad discussion began in Russia about whether Stalin was preparing a preemptive strike against Germany, was Hitler's attack really a preventive one? It would be best to turn to the opinions and documents of the side whose representatives first put forward this version of the preventive nature of the war on the part of Germany. They would not have missed the slightest proof of the aggressiveness of the Soviet Union.

Even General Marx, who stood at the origins of the development of the Barbarossa plan, predicted, without hiding his deep regret: "The Russians will not do us a favor by attacking us" [706]. Both he and his colleague in developing plans for an attack on the USSR, von Lossberg, without saying a word, believed that

The Red Army is not only not going to attack Germany, but is also unable to do so [707]. And Hitler himself at one time, in a conversation with the German ambassador in Moscow, Schulenburg, expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that "the Soviet Union cannot be provoked into an attack" [708]. And on July 21, 1940, at a meeting with von Brauchitsch, the Fuhrer

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In Russian, "Icebreaker" was first released in 1992 in Moscow.

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lazily declared: "The Russians do not want war" [709]. In September 1940, when the development of plans for Operation Barbarossa was already in full swing, Colonel Kinzel, head of the Vostok department of foreign armies, categorically rejected the very possibility of an offensive by the Red Army against the Wehrmacht, calling it "complete nonsense" [710]. There was no reason to expect any preemptive action from the Soviet side and from the High Command of the German Ground Forces (OKH), which, in a directive of January 22, 1941, noted that the tactics of the Red Army on the border would be defensive [711]. This point of view did not change even before the war itself, especially since it found more and more confirmation. Colonel Krebs, who temporarily replaced the military attache in Moscow, upon his return to Berlin, reported to the General Staff on May 5: "Russia will do everything to avoid war. Any concession can be expected, except for the renunciation of territorial claims" [712]. On June 4, just 18 days before the start of Operation Barbarossa, at a meeting in Zossen with the command of the GA Sever, as well as the 17th and 18th armies, Halder assessed the deployment of Soviet troops as a defensive, and large-scale offensive The Red Army considered it absolutely incredible. Moreover, he called the suggestion of such an offensive complete nonsense. Unlike Hitler, Halder did not even believe in the possibility of a private Soviet operation against Romania [713]. Finally, on June 13, 1941, the intelligence department of the OKH once again confirmed that "in general, defensive behavior should be expected from the Russians" [714]. On June 14, Halder wrote in his diary:

"A big meeting with the Fuhrer.

Reports of the commanders of army groups, armies and tank groups on upcoming actions in Operation Barbarossa.

<...> After dinner, the Fuhrer made a long political speech, in which he motivated the reasons for his decision to attack Russia and substantiated the position that the defeat of Russia forced England to stop the fight» [715].

In the circle of his senior military leaders, Hitler was quite frank. He invented the myth about the threat of a Soviet attack for the inhabitants of his country and the whole world. That's it

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it turns out that neither the OKW, nor the OKH, nor the Nazi commanders knew about the Russian preparations for an attack on Germany, but Rezun and his associates found out from somewhere. In addition to the evidence already mentioned, the scale, scope and depth of the ongoing reorganization of the Red Army and, as a result, its temporarily reduced combat effectiveness, completely refute the speculation about the Soviet aggression allegedly being prepared in 1941. Which, in fact, was confirmed during the invasion: the Germans did not find any signs of the Red Army preparing for the attack. So the German attack on the USSR can be considered preventive only from the point of view that Hitler, having assessed the emergence of a real strategic rival on the continent, decided to eliminate him in advance.

At this point, it would be possible to stop. Moreover, to waste time on the refutation of Rezun's fabrications was not originally part of our plans. After all, they have already been given a worthy assessment by many researchers and specialists in numerous publications of recent years. Rezun has already admitted some of his mistakes, but he is not going to give up. Having piled up heaps of lies, he covered himself with a kind of "presumption of innocence": he has to be exposed with the involvement of a bunch of tedious data, the assimilation of which requires certain knowledge and mental efforts from the reader. Lies, as you know, have short legs. But so far there are quite a lot of Rezun's supporters. Therefore, we cannot ignore the attempt by him and his followers to present the Soviet Union as the "arsonist" of the already ongoing world war.

The document, the full text of which was first published in Russia in 1993 by Colonel General Yu.A. Gorkov! in his article "Did Stalin prepare a preemptive strike against Hitler in 1941?" [716]. First of all, about the document itself. Its handwritten text was executed on fifteen pages by the Deputy Chief of the Operations Department of the General Staff

Gorkov Yuri Alexandrovich, 1928 In the SA since 1946, graduated from the Military Academy of Air Defense (1962), the Military Academy of the General Staff (1971). The last position in the troops (since 1983) was the chief of staff - the first deputy commander of the troops of the Moscow Air Defense District. Since 1988 - consultant of the Historical Archives and Military Memorial Center of the General Staff. Retired Colonel General.

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Major General A.M. Vasilevsky. To begin with, the document does not have a title. There is no date there either: on the first page of the form of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, only the month and year are indicated there. The document is addressed to the Chairman of the Council

and People's Commissars of the USSR comrade. Stalin, who was appointed to this post on May 6. Given that the data on the balance of forces and means of the parties in the note are given as of May 15, 1941 (this date is stamped on one of the attached maps), we can conclude that work on the document in any case was completed after May 6 and completed no earlier than May 15. But even this is not yet a fact. The document was not signed by anyone, the signatures of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Marshal S.K. Timoshenko and Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army General of the Army G.K. Zhukov is only "closed up". However, Yu.A. Gorkov notes that "after 1938, all operational plans developed by the General Staff did not have the signatures of the People's Commissar and the Chief of the General Staff (except for the September 1940 plan signed by Timoshenko and Meretskov)" [717]. That is, such a design of the document dated May 15, 1941 could be in the order of things. Attached to the text were detailed maps of Poland, East Prussia, and parts of Germany. Of course, there is no (and could not be) Stalin's resolution on it. According to A.M. Vasilevsky, when considering such documents by the Soviet leadership, Stalin gave all instructions orally [718].

The first section of the document gives a brief assessment of the enemy, including the composition of the grouping and his intentions. At the same time, it is characteristic that the conclusion confirms the probable direction of the main attack of the Wehrmacht in the south:

"I am reporting for your consideration the considerations on the plan for the strategic deployment of the armed forces of the Soviet Union in the event of a war with Germany and its allies."

1. Currently, Germany, according to the intelligence directorate of the Red Army, has deployed about

230 infantry, 22 tank, 20 motorized, 8 air and 4 cavalry divisions, for a total of about 284 divisions. Of them on

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The document was declassified only after August 1991; its fragments were first made public in an article by the Candidate of Military Sciences V. Kiselev "The Stubborn Facts of the Beginning of the War" (VIZh No. 2/1992).

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On the borders of the Soviet Union, as of May 15, 1941, up to 54,94 infantry, 13 tank, 12 motorized and 1 cavalry divisions were concentrated, and in total up to 120 divisions.

It is assumed that in today's political situation Germany, in the event of an attack on the USSR, will be able to put up against us - up to 144,137 infantry, 29-19 tank, 19-15 motorized, 2-4 cavalry and 5 airborne divisions, and in total up to 199 180 divisions.

<...> Most likely, the main forces of the German army, consisting of 76 infantry, 19 11 tank, 19 8 motorized, 2 cavalry and 5 air divisions, and in total up to 100 divisions, will be deployed south of the Brest-Demblin line to strike in the direction of Kovel, Rivne, Kiev.

At the same time, we must expect strikes in the north from East Prussia against Vilna and Riga, as well as short, concentric strikes from Suwalki and Brest against Volkovysk and Baranovichi.

<...> Potential allies [Germany can put up against the USSR: Finland up to 20 infantry divisions, Hungary - 15 infantry divisions, Romania up to 25 infantry divisions.

In total, Germany with its allies can deploy up to 249,240 divisions against the USSR.

Considering that Germany currently keeps her army mobilized, with rears deployed, she is in a position to forestall our deployment and launch a surprise strike.

In order to prevent this and defeat the German army, I consider it necessary in no case to give the initiative of action to the German command, to preempt the enemy in deployment and attack the German army even at the moment when it is in the stage of deployment and has not yet had time to organize a front and interaction of military branches "(highlighted by us. - Auth.)! [719]

The second section of the note outlined the goals and proposed course of action for the Red Army:

' TsAMO RF. F. 16. Op. 2951. D. 237. Structure of the document, copyright reserved. Additions to the text, presumably made by G.K. Zhukov or N.F. Vatutin, underlined, Crossed-out words (numbers) or part of the text are highlighted

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P. The immediate first strategic goal of the actions of the Red Army troops was to defeat the main forces of the German army deployed south of the Brest-Demblin line and reach the front of Ostrolenka, r. Narew, Lowich, Lodz, Kreyiburg, Oppeln, Olomouc.

The next strategic goal is to have an offensive from the Katowice region in a northern or northwestern direction to defeat the large forces of the Center and the Northern wing of the German front and seize the territory of former Poland and East Prussia.

The immediate task is to defeat the German army east of the river. Vistula and in the Krakow direction, go to the river.

Narov, Vistula and capture the Katowice area, for which:

a) deliver the main blow by the forces of the Southwestern Front in the direction of Krakow, Katowice, cutting off Germany from her southern allies;

6) deliver an auxiliary strike by the left wing of the Western Front in the direction of Sedleya, Demblin, with the aim of pinning down the Warsaw grouping and assisting the Southwestern Front in defeating the Lublin grouping of the enemy;

c) to conduct an active defense against Finland, East Prussia, Hungary and Romania and be ready to strike against Romania if the situation is favorable.

Thus, the Red Army will launch offensive operations from the Chizhov and Motovisko front with 152 divisions against 100 German divisions. Active defense is envisaged in the remaining sections of the state border."

The fourth section indicates the composition and tasks of the fronts deployed in the West, as well as:

"<...> In order to ensure the implementation of the plan outlined above, it is necessary to carry out the following measures in advance, without which it is impossible to deliver a surprise strike against the enemy both from the air and on the ground:

1. To carry out covert mobilization of troops under the guise of reserve training camps;

2. Under the guise of an exit to the camps, to carry out a covert concentration of troops closer to the western border, first of all, to concentrate all the armies of the reserve of the High Command;

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3. Covertly concentrate aviation on field airfields from remote districts and immediately begin to deploy aviation rear;

4. Gradually, under the guise of training camps and rear exercises, deploy a rear and a hospital base.

The fifth section indicates the composition (five armies, 47 divisions in total, including 12 armored and 8 motorized divisions) and the grouping of reserves of the High Command.

"<...> IG. Cover of concentration and deployment.

In order to protect ourselves from a possible surprise attack by the enemy, to cover the concentration and deployment of our troops and to prepare them for going on the offensive, it is necessary

dimo:

1. Organize a solid defense and cover of the state border, using for this all the troops of the border districts and almost all the aviation designated for deployment in the west;
2. Develop a detailed plan for the country's air defense and bring air defense systems to full readiness.

I have given orders on these issues and the development of plans for the defense of the state border and air defense is completely completed by 1.6.4Tr.

Composition and grouping of covering troops - according to the attached map.

At the same time, it is necessary to speed up the construction and armament of fortified areas in every possible way, to begin the construction of fortified areas on the rear line of Ostashkov and Pechep and to provide for the construction of new fortified areas in 1942 on the border with Hungary, as well as to continue the construction of fortified areas along the line of the old state border" [720].

Those who accuse the USSR of preparing for an attack on Germany seized on this document, trying to find confirmation of this in the subsequent actions of the Soviet command. Here, apparently, it is necessary to clarify that among those who consider the aforementioned note a directive document, two main groups of historians and publicists can be conventionally distinguished. The first is the "resunists" who accuse Stalin of instigating the Second World War. Trying to justify

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their point of view, they prefer to call the note on "Considerations..." the "Plan of Strategic Deployment", giving the impression that in its time it was, if not approved, then completely approved by Stalin. The second group includes those who also believe that the leadership of the USSR was really preparing a preemptive strike against Germany. But they are trying to prove that such a blow is not aggression, but one of the methods of active defense, aimed at defeating the main enemy grouping south of Warsaw and frustrating his intentions to carry out a sudden attack on the USSR. They propose to go further and "start from the fact that this document was the final operational plan of the Soviet General Staff (highlighted by us. - Auth.), The Red Army was preparing for its implementation in May-June 1941, when the preparations for the Soviet attack on Germany entered into final stage" [721].

Meanwhile, the note, while there is no evidence that practical steps were taken to implement the plan of action set out in it, and not some other, remain only considerations. In our opinion, both of them do not take into account what is behind the concept of preemptive

In this case, a full-scale strategic offensive operation of several fronts is hidden. With the determination of the purpose of the operation and tasks for the fronts, its planning only begins, during which a whole range of complex measures must be carried out. This is by no means a simple matter, requiring the painstaking work of a large team of highly qualified workers in the center and in the localities and a long time - at least three months -. In this regard, they usually refer to the fact that specific planning was carried out in the districts. They say that the operational plans of the districts (fronts) were worked out, for which the leaders were summoned to Moscow. Even the date of the meeting with Stalin is called - May 24th. It allegedly discussed issues related to the latest operational war plan as of May 15, 1941 with the commanders of the troops, members of the military councils and commanders of the Air Force of the western border districts. The argument that the plans developed in the districts should have been known, at least commanders of troops, chiefs of staff and operational

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departments of border districts are not taken into account. And they, by the way, at that time were engaged in finalizing plans for covering the state border on the basis of the instructions received from the General Staff.

The fact that in the memoirs of our military leaders there is no hint of the preparation of a preemptive strike can be understood. A special group was created at GlavPU Re to control the publication of the memoirs. "Consultants" and "reviewers" from this group, military censors and editors of publishing houses stood vigilantly on guard. But even in the documents of the "lower level" currently available to researchers, even indirect traces of the preparation of such an operation could not be found. Perhaps traces were left in documents stored in the bins of archives, hidden by the stamps "in special storage", "not subject to release", where ordinary researchers have no access? Supporters of a preemptive strike still hope that the documents they need will be found.

But even the very well-informed first publisher of "Considerations ...", Colonel-General Yu.A. Gorkov also found no traces of a real preparation for a preemptive strike. By the way, he is sometimes accused of the duality of his position. Like, on the one hand, Gorkov admitted that the pre-emptive strike of the Red Army on the German troops that had not yet deployed promised significant benefits, on the other hand, he denied that the Soviet side was preparing its implementation [722]. And why did they see duality? A completely realistic position of an experienced person who knows firsthand the whole "kitchen" of developing such plans of a person: one thing is desire, and another is the possibility of realizing one's plan. As for the "significant" benefits, we will speak below. And now we can rightly conclude that no directives to the districts on the preparation of pre-emptive actions were developed and were not brought to them.

Timoshenko and Zhukov, who knew the state of the Red Army, which was not mobilized and was in the process of reorganization and rearmament, undoubtedly understood that plans to cover the state border no longer corresponded to the changed conditions. That the covering armies, even with the support of aviation and front-line reserves, are unlikely to be able to repel the fall of large enemy groupings and provide those

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thereby concentrating and deploying the main forces destined for delivering a retaliatory strike. But the defeat of the enemy who had crossed the border and the transfer of hostilities to his territory was supposed to be carried out by the forces of already mobilized troops. The Germans, having a fully mobilized and deployed Wehrmacht, using a more developed network of railways and roads on their territory, in any case will outstrip our troops in the concentration of forces.

But the leaders of the military department did not at all want to be in the role of "switchmen". They understood the need to urgently strengthen the grouping of Soviet troops in the Western theater of operations. The immediate impetus for their display of unusual initiative and independence was Stalin's speech to the high command of the Red Army and graduates of military academies on May 5th. After hearing him say that the German army could be defeated, they decided to act. Zhukov instructed Vasilevsky to urgently prepare considerations for a new operational plan in accordance with his instructions. So the appeal to Stalin with the aforementioned note at an early stage in the development of the plan was quite logical. To a certain extent, this was improvisation: if they were preparing to attack Germany, then, given the low capacity of the Soviet railways for concentrating forces in the west, they would have started much earlier. In addition to inflicting a number of preemptive strikes by the forces of the ZapOVO and KOVO, Stalin was proposed a number of measures to strengthen the defense of our western border, including the advancement of five reserve armies from the depths. Apparently, it was presented to the political leadership that the reserve armies being advanced would be used to go over to a decisive offensive after repulsing the first blow of the aggressor. Otherwise, the leadership of the General Staff would be accused of defeatism.

Apparently, Stalin did not agree with the proposal of the General Staff to strike at Germany. He had good reasons for this. He assessed the state of the army and navy not only from the reports of the military. He also had other sources of information about the actual state of affairs. The measures for the radical reorganization of the army were far from

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